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THE HISTORY
OF
PROTESTANTISM
IN FRANCE,
FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE END OF THE
REIGN OF CHARLES IX.

LONDON:
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	Page
Review of Protestantism in France previous to the reign of Louis XII., A.D. 1497	5

CHAPTER II.

LOUIS XII. 1497—1515.

Proofs of the existence of Protestantism in France before the commencement of the reformation	30
--	----

CHAPTER III.

FRANCIS I. 1515—1547.

Dawn of the reformation.—The university of Paris.— Francis and his sister Margaret.—Progress of piety and learning.—Opposition to gospel preaching.—Com- mencement of persecution.—The ancient Vaudois.— Death of Francis I.	37
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY II. 1547—1559.

Political parties.—Court festivities and Protestant mar- tyrdoms.—Spread of the reformed religion.—The inquisition of the faith.—The Clerks' Meadow.—French version of the Psalms.—The king's visit to parliament. —Arrest of the Protestant councillors.—Protestantism in danger.—Sudden death of Henry II.	61
---	----

CHAPTER V.

FRANCIS II. 1559—1560.

Celebrated characters.—Political leaders.—Condition of the Protestants.—Conspiracy of Amboise.—The prince de Condé arrested.—Condemned to death.—The war- rant delayed.—Death of Francis II., 1560	81
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES IX.—PART I. 1560—1574.

	Page
Vow of Francis II.—Catharine de' Medici and the Guises.—Protestants favoured.—General spread of Protestantism.—The triumvirate formed to crush it.—Protestant reverses.—Public worship prohibited.—Conference at Poissy.—Beza.—Massacre of Vassy.—Outbreak of civil war	106

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLES IX.—PART II.

The duke of Guise and prince de Condé.—Seizure of the young king and his mother by the Catholic leaders.—State of the Protestant army at the commencement of the war.—Demoralising effects of civil war.—Queen Elizabeth assists the French Protestants.—Misdeeds and cruelties on both sides.—Battle of Dreux.—Dream of Condé.—Marshal St. André killed.—The prince taken prisoner.—Siege of Orléans—Danger of the Protestants.—Assassination of the duke of Guise.—Peace concluded	126
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES IX.—PART III.

Catharine acquires supreme power.—Education of Charles IX.—The royal tour.—Protestantism of the queen of Navarre.—The prince de Condé at court.—Different conduct of Coligny.—Disappointment of the Protestants.—Public worship restricted.—Reformed monks and nuns ordered to return to their convents.—War renewed.—Battle of St. Denis.—Last of the triumvirate killed.—Death of the prince de Condé.—Death of Andelot.—Letter of Coligny.—Dissimulation of the king and his mother.—Admiral Coligny at court.—Marriage of the king of Navarre.—Coligny assassinated.—St. Bartholomew's eve.—Massacre of the Protestants.—Remorse of the king.—His death.—Review of preceding events.—Conclusion	155
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THE HISTORY
OF
PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

PERIOD PREVIOUS TO LOUIS XII. A.D. 1497.

PERHAPS there is no country in the world, when we except the Holy Land, where the entire history of religion, taken in connexion with the circumstances which have surrounded it, has been at once more interesting and more painful, than in France.

In France, the Christian religion has uniformly been placed between two enemies ;—on one side, superstition ; on the other, infidelity. An escape from the former has too often caused a fall into the latter.

In no country has the history of persecution and martyrdom been more striking than in France, whether the persecutors were the furious worshippers of the gods of ancient Rome and Gaul, or the unhappily blinded and bigoted disciples of the church which succeeded them. In the first ages of Christianity, the martyrs

of Lyons and Vienne witnessed a good confession in the midst of pagan animosity ; and, to mock their Christian hope of a joyful resurrection, their proud adversaries cast the ashes of their burned bodies into the river Rhone. But the spirit that animated them revived in many a future race : and the Protestants of professedly Christian France, under various denominations, and in various ages, have suffered for conscience' sake, with a constancy and zeal equal to that of the martyrs of heathen Gaul.

The name of Protestant is comparatively new, and custom has led to its not being applied, in general, to any period previous to the time of Martin Luther, or of the Reformation. Protestantism, however, is as old as the corruptions or errors of the Christian church. The disciples were called Christians, first at Antioch ; and Christians were called Protestants, first in Germany : but applying the term as it will here be used, to all who protested against the errors which began to prevail in the church, from the time of its establishment as the religion of the Roman empire—we can find Protestants, or protesters, in every age. In searching for them, however, the inquirer should bear in mind, that, as the darkness of the professedly Christian world, and the errors and corruptions of the then extensively established church of Rome, drew on more deeply, all who in any way dissented from it or its errors, were styled heretics. And as the only

historians of the dark ages were of some of those religious orders, among whom the little learning left in the world was sheltered, we must not expect to find clear evidence of the truth in all cases ; it being, doubtless, often the fact, that the so-called heretics, to whom almost every strange crime was imputed, were simply disciples of Christ, who desired to hold fast the truths which the professing church had let slip ; and to maintain the simple faith of the gospel as it had been delivered to their fathers.

To the same cause we may, perhaps, ascribe the fact, that some authors, of much learning, and of no degree of bigotry, following the ancient monkish memorialists of the dark ages, have classed among heretics, and holders of strange doctrine, persons who might here and there have appeared in the world to hold the lamp of truth, while darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Thus the people called Albigenses have been judged of by an eminent writer,* in a manner that appears unreasonable. It is forgotten, apparently, that their enemies were, not their judges only, but their historians also. No existing document of their own is brought forward as the exponent of their faith ; no Protestant historian of the time, who has recorded their conduct or their creed, is adduced in evidence of the asserted fact, that they were heretics and Manicheans. Happily, however, the Benedictine monks—the most pious

* Hallam : History of Literature.

and learned, and therefore the most tolerant of the numerous religious orders which arose in Europe—have left to the diligent, impartial, and freedom-loving historian, ample details whereby to work out the facts of the case of the Albigenses; and, in very briefly introducing it with the History of Protestantism in France, we shall follow only the course of materials which Sismondi and similar writers have collected.

It is not intended to allude to all the controversialists who, either collectively or individually, opposed, or separated from the errors and abuses which continued to increase in the church of Rome, until, at the epoch of the Albigenses, the twelfth century, they reached their acmé.

In order to enumerate all these protesters, it would be necessary to go back to the time of Vigilantius; with whom many of the French clergy took part in his opposition to martyr-worship, an early error into which Christians fell, through a natural, but overwrought veneration for the dead who died in the Lord, during the terrible struggle of Christianity with paganism.

Then, also, we should have to trace the rise of image-worship, which was likewise protested against; the doctrines of purgatory and prayers for the dead; and various other superadded articles of faith, against which protests were continually made; and, above all, that great theme of controversy, transubstantiation, which

drew forth the strongest protests from the bishop of Tours.

To write all this would be to write a church history; but to do this would show that Protestantism in France, as well as in other places, was coeval with error in the church, and with Popery at Rome.

We know nothing of the doctrines of the Manicheans except from the judgment of those who condemned them. That universally reprobated sect left no written documents, no religious forms, no confession of faith, by which, out of their own mouths, they might be convicted. Some absurd and contradictory tenets are imputed to them; and it would be as impossible to undertake their defence, as it would be useless to search into the cause of their condemnation; that condemnation was apparently just. But it became general, in the ages preceding the reformation, to call all persons who dissented from the church of Rome, Manicheans—thus alone leaving us room to suspect that there *might* be good among the branded sect, which arose in the church just at the time when its early simplicity was departing.

The Paulicians, a race of decided Protestants, who appeared so early as 660, are said by an infidel historian, Gibbon, “sincerely to have condemned the errors of the Manicheans,” but yet they have generally been identified with them. The Paulicians derived their religious tenets simply from a Bible; a rare gift, bestowed on their leader, Constantine: they were named

Paulicians from professing to take the writings of St. Paul as their code of faith and practice. Like the reformers of the sixteenth century, they did away, most unscrupulously, with images, relics, and martyr-worship. Persecution scattered them from the east; and they came into the south, and were known in both Italy and France.

Bossuet, the eloquent preacher of the Roman Catholic church, states that, in the year 1007, some heretics were burned at the city of Orleans, because, "as it is well known, that the Roman laws condemned the Manicheans to death, the holy king Robert (of France) judged these people worthy of the fire."

This is the first Protestant immolation we record in France. These early martyrs were only a branch of the great tree whose roots were still to remain in the soil.

The history of the people called Vaudois, or Waldenses, is too well known, and has been too often repeated, to need repetition here; and is, besides, not legitimately included in that of Protestantism in France.*

Lyons, the see of Ireneus, the pupil of the martyred Polycarp, is, from the earliest age of Christianity, famous in that history. It was the zeal of one of its merchants, Valdo, that led to the error of attributing to him the first appearance of the Protestant religion in that country. Valdo attained greater celebrity from

* A Monthly Volume—"Sketches of the Waldenses," has been published by the Religious Tract Society.

translating and reading the Gospels to his more ignorant neighbours. His conduct was represented to the pope, he was obliged to fly from Lyons, and finally retired to Bohemia, where he probably introduced that spirit of Protestantism for which Huss afterwards died.

We turn now to the story of the Albigenses, entwined as it is in the lamentable and interesting one of Languedoc and Provence. But we must first describe the state of those pleasant provinces in which religion sprang up in a soil that might not appear congenial to it, and which yet lends it an additional interest. The account here given is chiefly, and briefly, extracted from Sismondi.

Languedoc, Provence, Catalonia, and the surrounding provinces which depended on the king of Aragon, were peopled by an industrious and intelligent race, addicted to commerce and the arts, and still more to poetry. They had formed the Provençal language, which, separating itself from the French, was distinguished by greater harmony, richness, and picturesqueness of expression. This language, studied by all the genius of the age, dedicated to politeness and song, appeared destined to become the first and most elegant of the languages of Europe. Those who professed it had renounced the name of Frenchmen for that of Provençals. They wished to form themselves into a distinct nation, and to separate absolutely from the French; to whom they were, indeed, inferior in the arts of war, but whom they greatly

excelled in all the attainments of civilisation. These people were far in advance of a barbarous age.

Raymond Bérenger, count of Barcelona, acquired the dominion of Provence in right of his wife, and introduced there that spirit of liberty and chivalry, that taste for the elegant arts and sciences, which the Arabians had brought to Spain, and which gave birth to the poetical spirit that shone out at once over Provence and all the south of Europe, like an electric flash in the midst of the most palpable darkness, illuminating all things with its brightness.

We must not, however, enter on a theme pleasing and romantic, but unsuited to our graver history—the troubadours of gay Provence, their songs and harps, and courts of gaiety and politeness. But knowledge has always brought in its train rebellion against superstition; and, therefore, Protestantism is, in a great degree, connected with the refinement and civilisation of Provence. A people had grown up, even among these gay troubadours, who exercised the privilege of reason, and dared to question the truth of what they were taught implicitly to believe. The numerous courts of the small princes aspired to be models of taste and politeness. They lived in festivity; their chief occupations were tournaments, courts of gaiety, and poetry, where verses were recited or sung, and prizes awarded. The cities were numerous and flourishing; their forms of government nearly republican. They

had consuls chosen by the people, and possessed the privilege of forming communes, which rendered them nearly equal to the celebrated Italian republics with which they traded.

They had been obliged, by this commercial intercourse, to mix with both Moors and Jews, held by their fellow-catholics of the time in utter detestation, instead of being regarded with the compassion of Christian love. Bigotry, in consequence, prevailed to a less degree in civilised Provence, while their French neighbours were still subjected to its iron sway.

Among them, and beneath the shelter of their liberal-minded princes, the Protestants who denied "the sovereign authority of the pope, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, the doctrine of purgatory," and some other tenets of Rome, found protection, and multiplied to an extraordinary extent.

In the year 1147, and again in 1181, missionaries were sent by Rome to convert these heretics. We blame not the effort, so long as no other means are resorted to. It is the duty of all to endeavour to direct those whom they really believe to be in error into the right path. But these missionaries made no way among the people; their own pastors, who taught them from the Scriptures, received more attention.

At length, pope Innocent III. ascended the pontifical throne, and while his genius governed the political affairs of Europe, directed the arms of the crusaders against Constantinople, controlled or menaced the monarchs of Germany,

Spain, France, or Hungary, it inspected the spiritual state of Christendom, observed the growth of heresy, and put forth its energies to arrest the progress of that mental power which was inimical to the boundless sway of the mortal man whom his subjects could ignorantly dare to style "Our Lord God the Pope!"

Two Cistercian monks, armed with full authority, were sent to Languedoc; but, notwithstanding their violent proceedings, even to an abuse of their powers, they met with so little success, and found the number of heretics so vast, that it was determined still more strenuous measures should be taken.

Every true friend to the church was called on to deliver up even his brother to death, if he continued in opposition to it; they were forbidden to have any dealings with the heretics; "so that they, being in want of the necessaries of life, may be compelled to submit to the church."

Raymond, count of Toulouse, was the chief of the princes who refused to murder, or cause to be murdered, his unoffending subjects; and he was, therefore, accused of being himself infected by their heresy.

Dominic, the Spaniard, and the father of the Inquisition, and Francis d'Assise, the founder of the Franciscan order, at this time earned the title of Saint, conferred upon them by their church. Two and two, their barefooted preaching monks were sent out, to draw from the simple, and perhaps incautiously zealous people,

a statement of their doctrines, which were sometimes, perhaps, erroneously described, and at others wilfully misrepresented ; gaining also, in this way, a knowledge of the most eminent of the Provençal heretics.

The true adherents of Rome were asked why they did not unite to exterminate their heretical neighbours. The answer was, "They are our friends ; we live among them, and see the goodness of their lives." But a favourable opportunity for putting down by force what neither threats nor arguments could lessen, was offered at this juncture, by an interval of repose to the tumult caused in Europe by the crusades to the east for the recovery of the holy land, or of the holy sepulchre. There were many idle arms in France; and a crusade against the Albigenses was proposed, instead of one against the Turks. A council was held concerning them at a place named Albi, from which, it is most probable, the above name was given to the Protestants of Languedoc and Provence.

Count Raymond of Toulouse was one of those mild, but uncertain and undecided characters who, however friendly to truth they may be found, and, when truth meets no great opposition, are, in the event of a contest, more likely to injure, than to sustain, the cause to which they are attached. His was a struggle for the preservation of his own rights, and for his own dominions; but in that struggle were blended the spiritual interests, the lives, and

properties of persecuted Christians. Such was the case with many a noble lord and gallant knight of that period, who professed to have "no quarrel with the church," if the church would not quarrel with them. It was probably that aspiration to nationality, that desire to separate from the higher authority of the French sovereign, on whom their lord was dependent, which united with the spiritual wrath of the pontiff, in bringing upon this once happy region the weight of that political power which crushed and uprooted from its native soil the spirit of the gay, poetical Provençals, and the existence there of the poor pious Albigenses. The grey frieze of the latter was seen mingled with the bright armour of the former, and the strictness and severity of the one was strongly opposed to the polite, but too dissipated manners of the other. Yet their history and their fate were one. Political and religious interests blended in the conflict; and in reading narratives of such a struggle, we should always remember that, with these two classes, real heretics and fanatics are sure to spring up, as tares among wheat, in every outburst of mental liberty or awakening of religious zeal.

A nobler character than count Raymond was his nephew, the young viscount of Beziers; the cruelly betrayed victim of the church of which he remained a member, even while fighting for his own possessions, or for the lives and liberties of his Protestant people.

"Pestilential man!" thus wrote pope Innocent

to the sovereign count of Toulouse, “what pride has seized your heart to brave the Divine wrath by protecting the enemies of the faith ? Do you not fear eternal flames ? ought you not to dread the temporal chastisements you have provoked by so many crimes ?”

Raymond, however, at first, believed that his own interest lay in uniting with his threatened subjects.

The crusade was then published in France, and the terms of the papal grant offered to Philip Augustus, the king of that country, in return for carrying his arms against these heretical provinces, were, temporally, the dominions of the dispossessed Raymond, and, spiritually, the plenary indulgence granted to the eastern crusaders.*

Frightened into submission, the count of Toulouse engaged to exterminate the obnoxious Protestants from his states; but his heart was not in the work. The pope's legate, Castelnau, calling the count a perjurer and supporter of heretics, left him in a passion, and was, soon after, killed by one of Raymond's followers. This gave fresh occasion against him. He was excommunicated; and the following is an extract from the papal bull on the subject:—“ And, as following the sanctions of the holy fathers, we must not keep faith with those who keep not faith with God, and are separated from

* It will be seen that, about three hundred years after this time, one of the parliaments of Paris applauded the memory of this monarch for burning six hundred heretics in one day.

the church, we discharge, by our apostolic authority, all who believe themselves bound to this count by any oath of alliance or fidelity; and permit any Catholic men to pursue his person, to occupy and retain his territories, especially for the purpose of exterminating heresy."

The preaching of this home crusade was scarcely less ardent than that for the holy land had been. Arnold Amalric, the fiercely zealous abbot of Citeaux, was as successful as Peter the hermit, in gaining crusaders to exterminate the infidels at home, who were declared to be infinitely more hateful than Turks and Saracens.

War was then a passion and a pastime. The warriors who had fought in the east were glad to fight again; and men who had not taken the cross for Palestine, willingly did so for Provence; the highest and the noblest, as well as the common soldier, joining in the bloody work with all the ardour and confidence of well-doing, which the exhortations and rewards of their church inspired.

It will now appear hardly credible that an army of three hundred thousand men, for this purpose, placed a symbol of the Christian faith, a scarlet cross, on the front of their white mantles, wearing it there instead of on the shoulder, as a badge of distinction from the eastern crusaders.

The high-minded, gallant, young Raymond, of Beziers, was twenty-four years of age; he

had never left the church of Rome, though he had been educated by a pious Albigensian tutor, and, during a long minority, placed under the charge of the count de Foix, one of the chief of the Protestants. He was such a young knight as his pleasant land produced—brave, honourable, free, and fearless. With him the question was not one of religion, but of liberty and justice. His uncle, the count of Toulouse, terrified at the coming storm, shrank from a war with the church. To avert this danger, Beziers accompanied him to a conference with the leader of the crusade, the abbot of Citeaux. To him both these princes declared their freedom from all taint of heresy, their innocence of the death of Castelnau, and their desire to be heard by the pope himself, and to propitiate his clemency.

Finding they had no favour to expect from the haughty and cruel priest, young Raymond told his uncle that their only hope now lay in making as good a defence against the crusading hosts as they could. After some altercation, they parted to pursue their respective plans; Beziers, to fortify his castles and prepare his troops, and the count, to endeavour to propitiate Innocent. The papal terms offered to the latter were, that he should join the crusade against his friends and subjects, and deliver up seven strong castles as a guarantee for his fidelity. In return, he was, in due time, to obtain—absolution!

Innocent wrote to his legate, saying, “ We

counsel you, with the apostle Paul, to employ craft with this count. We must attack separately those who are separated from unity. Employ towards him a wise dissimulation, that the other heretics may be more easily defeated, and that, afterwards, we may crush him when he shall be left alone :" thus quoting Scripture, as, alas! we know the author of all evil once did.

In the spring of the year 1209, the crusading host—whose numbers may be better accounted for by the fact that the term of their service was only for forty days—poured into the fair region of Provence ; the preaching monks heading the armies. The unhappy count of Toulouse surrendered his castles, and was led into the church of St. Gilles, in his own capital, with a cord about his neck, and scourged round the altar in token of reconciliation with the pope. After which discipline, he was allowed to take the cross, and assist in the slaughter of unoffending people.

His nephew Raymond sounded the tocsin of war through his petty states, and aroused his vassals and friends to a deadly struggle. Castle after castle fell, and heretics, poor and simple, or rich and noble, were burned in piles. The crusaders were led by the terrible Simon de Montfort, a man formidable as a warrior, and austere, fanatical, and cruel, as a religious leader. The young Raymond was thus menaced with dangers to which he could only oppose despairing bravery and the righteousness of his cause.

The crusaders encamped before his capital, the city of Beziers. He had made every possible provision, and desired his people to defend themselves to the last. The bishop treacherously offered the garrison their lives, on the part of the abbot of Citeaux, if they delivered up the heretics that were within the walls. "Tell the legate," said these gallant men, who had to fear a death by famine, as well as by the sword, "that rather than commit such a baseness, we would eat our own children."

The crusaders suddenly obtained possession of the city, proceeding through the gates together with the garrison, who had made a sally on them. "They entered the city of Beziers," says an ancient and anonymous writer of the time, "and killed more people than ever was known in the world.* They spared neither young nor old, nor infants at the breast. . . They that could, did retreat into the great church of St. Nazarius, both men and women; the chaplains whereof caused the bells to ring: but neither the sound of the bells, nor the sight of the chaplains in their priestly habits, nor of the clerks, could save any from being put to the sword. One only escaped; the rest were all slain, and died. Nothing so pitiable was ever heard of, or done: and when the city was pillaged, it was set on fire, so that it was all destroyed and burned, as it appears at this day. No living thing was left, which was a cruel vengeance, seeing that

* Such an exaggerated style of expression is rather common to that period.

the said viscount was neither a heretic nor of the sect."

It was on this occasion that the well-known answer of the abbot of Citeaux was given to those who, naturally, inquired how they were to distinguish the faithful Catholics from the numerous heretics who were sheltered in Beziers—"Kill them all!—the Lord will know those that are his." The number killed was said to be exaggerated, and the abbot, in writing to the pope, estimated *the truth* at fifteen thousand!

Young Raymond, burning with grief and resentment, shut up himself and his remaining army, friends and subjects, in the strong fortress of Carcassone. That fine feudal relic of the middle ages still remains to bear witness to a glorious, but fatal struggle for civil and religious liberty. It surmounts a vast platform of rock, rising out of one of the plains so general in Languedoc ; and from its still-existing battlements may be seen the plain beneath, which fancy could cover with the white-cloaked crusaders of Rome, the chivalrous aspect of the warriors of France, the "pomp and circumstance of war," arrayed against a small and scanty band of harmless people, and the brave young knight, who stood at bay within the solid walls of that frowning castle. The voice of piety, the prayer of faith, might be heard within ; while without were seen the gay and gallant soldiers, to whom battle was a sport ; the zealot, who now fought for salvation ; the penitent, who

fought for pardon ; and the needy, who fought for plunder.

And within these walls, too, were some who had lived in pleasure, the lovers of gaiety and song, whose hearts, without dissenting from the church of Rome, spurned at tyranny, temporal or spiritual, and who had resolved to die as men and soldiers, rather than live degraded as slaves, like Raymond of Toulouse.

Don Pedro of Aragon, the most gallant monarch of his time, came to the camp of the crusaders, in hopes of making some terms for his valiant nephew. The besiegers had been twice repulsed with terrible loss, and were getting dissatisfied with their service. The abbot and De Montfort engaged the king of Aragon to visit young Raymond, who candidly told him he would be glad to make terms, if possible. "I see clearly," he said, "that we cannot maintain ourselves, on account of the multitude of peasants, women, and children, who have taken refuge with us ; they die daily, and I cannot reckon their numbers. But were it only myself and people, I swear to you I would die of famine rather than surrender to the abbot."

The terms offered to the brave defender of Carcassone, were, permission to leave it with twelve persons, all the others to be left to the mercy of Arnold Amalric and De Montfort.

" Sooner than leave the least of my people at his mercy," said young Raymond, " I will be flayed alive."

No sooner was the answer returned, than a

furious assault was made on the walls. It was again unsuccessful ; even the women and children fought, pouring boiling water down on the assailants.

The forty days' service was nearly expired, and many of the crusaders were ready to renounce a renewal of theirs. Their leaders became uneasy ; but Raymond, unconscious of what was passing in their camp, was still more so. The horrors of famine were felt among his people ; the cisterns were drying up ; wives and mothers, as well as soldiers and captains, looked to him as their sole resource. The abbot, in this extremity, sent to propose an amicable conference. The incautious, though honourable, young lord, gladly accepted of it, and, attended by three hundred of his chosen knights and officers, went out to the crusaders' camp.

He was received by De Montfort and the abbot, who was the pope's legate ; and, while pleading his own cause, and that of the persecuted Albigenses, the latter coolly told him that his people might do as well as they could for themselves, but as for him, he was a prisoner.

His three hundred followers were already in custody, and he was consigned to the charge of the duke of Burgundy, who, proving too lenient to his noble prisoner, he was afterwards given over to the savage De Montfort, and, it is believed, poisoned in his prison.

At sunrise next morning, the crusaders pre-

pared for an easy assault on Carcassone. They advanced with shoutings against it ; but there was no response ; the stillness of death was over it ; they feared a deceit, but entered, and found it empty. The poor people had escaped by a secret cavern. The walls of that fine fortress were left, and still remain, a memorial of the times of the Albigenses. An *auto da fé* was formed of four hundred persons, instead of the thousands who would otherwise have been sacrificed.

This episode of the Albigensian crusaders has been chosen as the most interesting ; but there are numerous other occurrences of a similar kind, which are equally connected with the melancholy story of Protestantism in Provence.

At the castle of Menerbe, De Montfort said, "Mass had not been sung for thirty years." The earl who defended it would not turn Romanist ; he was taken, and thrown into a prison, where he was suffocated, and his wife, daughter, and sister, burned in one fire. La Vaur was also taken ; its lord Aimeric gibbeted, with eighty others, and his noble sister, called the lady of La Vaur, thrown into a pit, which was then filled with stones.

The brave king of Aragón, a celebrated knight and troubadour, or poet, of his times, fell fighting for the Provençals at the battle of Murêt. De Montfort came and looked at his body, and is said to have shed tears over it. Singular power of superstition ! how strangely

does it pervert the affections, and darken the human understanding !

De Montfort fell at Toulouse ; for count Raymond's submissions purchased him no peace, either in his states, for which other claimants were ready, nor in his conscience, which was divided between devotion to his church and regard for his people. He was forced to arms again, and recovered his capital. De Montfort besieged it, and was hearing mass, when news was brought to him of a sally of the garrison. He wished to wait, for it was the moment of the elevation of the host, but, unable to refrain, he exclaimed aloud, "Lord, let thy servant depart in peace !" and rushed forth to head his army. A stone, cast from the wall, it is believed by a woman's hand, struck him on the head, and killed the ferocious warrior, and scourge of the Albigenses. A.D. 1218.

Raymond's death soon followed. He was one who halted between two opinions. In his last days, he made himself a monk, and kissed with devotion the mantle of his order as he died. Yet he was excommunicated, and his body denied burial. The pope himself departed from the world about the same time ; but his successor trod in his steps against the heretics of the south of France.

Simon de Montfort had acquired the territories of young Raymond, and, so long as they were in his possession, they would be kept free from what was called the Albigensian heresy. While he lived, the whole south of France fre-

quently either streamed in blood, or glowed with fire. "For twenty years, were continually seen massacres and tortures. Religion was overthrown, knowledge extinguished, and humanity trampled under foot."

Pope Honorius III. invited the French king, Louis VIII., to take arms against the still existing Albigenses and Provençals; Louis obeyed, and besieged Avignon, which was defended by the young count of Toulouse, earl Raymond's son. Disease in the French army cut off numbers, but the pope's legate, demanding a conference, contrived to give admission to the troops, who took the city by surprise. After the capture, likewise, of Toulouse, Raymond could no longer make head against his enemies; from the time of his submission, the subjugation of heresy, so called, in Languedoc and Provence, may be dated.

On the death of Raymond, Languedoc, once a separate sovereignty, was united to the kingdom of France, under the reign of Louis IX., called St. Louis, A.D. 1249. In 1245, Provence had passed into the possession of the cruel Charles of Anjou. Thus the sovereign families disappeared in the south of France; and the Provençals, and all who spoke their language, became subject to a rival nation, which they had always regarded with the most violent aversion. "In their servitude, a few plaintive songs of grief were heard; but the muses fled from a soil polluted with carnage."

Civilisation, learning, gaiety, and song, fled

from the once happy and polite Provence. But where fled they who had cultivated in peace a higher science? who had, in simplicity, after the manner which men called heresy, worshipped the God of their fathers? Poets, romancers, historians, deplore the fate of the troubadours and knights of Provence; few follow forth the escaped of Israel, who wandered away to some mountain refuge, where, in the shadow of the lonely hills, they could serve God in secret:—

“ For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers’ God.
Thou hast made thy children mighty,
By the touch of the mountain sod;
Thou hast fixed their ark of refuge,
Where the spoiler’s foot ne’er trod;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers’ God.”

In these hills, the remnant of the pious Albigenses, when their defenders, their nobles, and princes, were no more, sought a refuge; and there, for the space of two hundred and fifty years, we shall find them continuing to carry on the unbroken line of Protestantism in France: a band, indeed, reserved as sheep appointed to the slaughter; often sought out by the inquisitorial eye of bigotry, and made known by one of those cruel massacres of the Vaudois, with which the world is too familiarly acquainted. By this term, Vaudois, they became generally known, being blended with the Protestant dwellers in the valleys of Piedmont; and as such we pursue their history no further.

Though sheltered in the mountains of Provence and Dauphiné, Protestantism was effect-

ually silenced in the south of France by the invention of the monk Dominic, the inquisition, established at Toulouse for that purpose, A.D. 1221. There, until the ravages of the French revolution, was still to be seen the cell which Dominic—strangely denominated saint— inhabited, when he came to inspect this first germ of that horrible plant, which, in its maturity, cast the gloom of its deadly shadow over the liberties, consciences, and lives of men.

CHAPTER II.

LOUIS XII. 1497—1515.

UP to the time of Louis XII., the reign which immediately preceded the end of the great reformation, Protestants still existed in France, though all other titles were then merged in the general one of Vaudois.

The mountains of the beautiful province of Dauphiné had cherished the descendants of the Protestants of Languedoc and Provence, and in the mountain region of the latter once devastated land, they had found a retired, but not always secure, asylum. There, mingled with the Vaudois, the escaped fugitives of Lyons and its vicinity, they passed under the same title, as they had maintained the same faith. They were ready to hail a new generation of Protestants.

No sooner did the news of the reformation, or rather of the revived doctrines of the gospel, contended for in Paris by a doctor and student of theology, reach to these mountain-dwellings, than many a Protestant voice broke forth to

welcome and encourage their brethren in the faith. The cruel result to themselves we shall be obliged to notice in the succeeding reign. At present, we will not precede the course of our narrative.

The difficulties of Protestantism in France have been most remarkable. A slight turn of the balance only has often seemed wanting to make that fine country a Protestant one. If the reformation had gained ground in the reign of Louis XII. instead of that of his gay and proud successor, Francis I., there is little doubt that it would have triumphed. And, again, if the latter generous and chivalrous, though arbitrary prince, had not yielded to the suggestions of ill advisers and the considerations of worldly policy, under what favourable auspices would it not have progressed!

As we follow the course of history, men may deplore the seeming results of chance; but they ought to know, notwithstanding, that the Lord reigneth, be the inhabitants of the world never so unquiet—"Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

The convocation of Catholic clergy assembled by Louis at Tours, decided that the king had power to make war upon the pope. The deputies of the still oppressed Vaudois, or Protestants, obtained an audience of the same tolerant monarch; and, having been informed by them that "they believed in the Scriptures, the ten commandments, and the symbol, or creed, but not in the pope, nor in the doctrines

he taught," the king sent commissioners to Merindol and Cabrières, places then inhabited by these Protestants—to inquire into the facts of their case. The commissioners reported that, among them, baptism was administered, the articles of belief and ten commandments taught, the sabbath solemnly observed, and the word of God expounded." On hearing which, Louis replied that "these people were then much better than himself and his Catholic subjects." These two facts serve as brief indexes to the state of religious feeling at the epoch immediately preceding the great reformation of Martin Luther.

It is not intended to go into the history of the reformation in Germany, nor into that of the well-known French reformers. The object of this work is to exhibit the history of Protestantism in France. Some observations, however, must be made respecting the German reformation, with which, more or less closely, the religious changes of those times, in so many countries of Europe, were connected.

It is remarkable that most of the important discoveries of science, and many of the most rare departments of literature, have, at the same moment, been engaging the minds and labours of persons quite unknown to each other; who have each claimed the honour of an invention or discovery, each supposing his labours unshared by any individual. A single announcement has brought these simultaneous labours to light, and, in some cases, the world

has been, and is, at a loss to whom to ascribe the meed of priority.

So has it been with the reformation in the church. The leaven was at work in other places besides the convent of Wittenberg, but the process was unnoticed, until Martin Luther came forth from his cell and published aloud to a startled world the discoveries that others had made in secret. At the very time when Luther was going on his monkish mission to Rome, the doctrines of the gospel were being preached at Paris ; and the work of the reformation had commenced in the university there, while Luther was yet an Augustine monk.

The principles and opinions of the reformation did not spread from Germany to France in the first instance ; though the writings of the German controversialists afterwards greatly increased them. Neither did they extend from France to Germany ; they sprang up independently in each country, and, it may be affirmed, by the same means. Luther found a Bible in his monastery, and Lefèvre had a Bible in his university.

Lefèvre was a devout doctor of the law, a preacher of the theology of his church, and a strict observer of all its rites—praying before the images of the virgin Mary up to about the fifty-fifth year of his life. At evening-time it became light with him, and the learned reformer, Beza, spoke of “that good old man” as being “the first who courageously began the revival of the pure religion of Jesus Christ.”

The object of Lefèvre was, not to discover or expose the errors or corruptions of the church of Rome, from which, indeed, he never completely separated—so much as to find for himself the consolations of the gospel, and to declare to others the way of salvation he had found. The light which he received with joy from the Bible, he diffused through the university in which he taught. It was not, then, the common people who heard him gladly, but young men whose minds burned for knowledge, and who crowded to his teaching, not only because he was beloved, but because the truth he taught was intelligible to anxious, inquiring, vigorous minds.

Among the pupils was William Farel, whose career, as one of the boldest of the reformers, is already sufficiently known. The same study of the Scriptures made Farel a convert to the gospel doctrines; and the closest intimacy subsisted between the venerable doctor and the more ardent disciple.

The character of Lefèvre is full of interest; and, were this a history of the reformation only, it would be pleasing to dwell upon it. He might be said by “preaching up Christ, to preach down error.” He scarcely appears in the light of a reformer, or controversialist, but in that of a teacher and preacher of religious truth.

Uncompromising, indeed, were the truths he taught. “Religion,” said Lefèvre, “has one Foundation, one Head—Jesus Christ. The

cross of Christ alone opens heaven and shuts the gate of hell." This was the doctrine with which Martin Luther, then in his convent, had afterwards to assail the foundation on which rest the erroneous doctrines of the papal church.

The principles of this Protestantism rapidly advanced at the celebrated university of Paris. The fact was soon made known, and in this manner. Cardinal de Vio, who afterwards disputed with Luther at Augsburg, wrote a treatise, in which he asserted that the pope was absolute monarch of the church. King Louis XII. desired to have the opinions of the university upon this treatise, and laid it before that body in the year 1512. The result was, that one of the youngest of the doctors, named James Allman, wrote an answer to the cardinal's statement, which he read before all the professors of theology; for which refutation he obtained great applause. Such, so far as Protestantism was concerned, was the state of affairs at the close of the reign of Louis XII.

Only three months before his death, that aged monarch was married to Mary of England, sister of Henry VIII., who, in her eighteenth year, and devotedly attached to another, was sacrificed to the political interests of a brother who really loved her. The princess Mary was attended to her new kingdom by a child who afterwards became too famous in our history—Anne Boleyn, then thirteen years old. In France, she is believed to have learned the

principles of the reformation which she afterwards favoured in England.

Louis was dying at the period of this ill-assorted marriage ; he survived it but a short time. At his death, the crown of France devolved to his cousin and son-in-law, Francis I.

The daughter of Louis XII. is well known in the interesting annals of the early-commenced reformation in Italy. Renée, duchess of Ferrara, was one of its first converts. But Ferrara, at whose gay court the celebrated Olympia Morata lived, was in the dominions of the pope, and was much too near to Rome to allow of the progress of the reformation. On the death of her husband, the duchess of Ferrara left that scene of religious persecution, and returned to her native land, where, at her residence near Paris, to which she afterwards retired, she sheltered the Protestants of France.

CHAPTER III.

FRANCIS I. 1515—1547.

DURING the thirteenth century, a singular revolution was effected almost throughout Europe; not in the religion only which was then established, but in the politics which then prevailed.

That century is remarkable for having produced a number of men such as might each, singly, have reflected some lustre on his age. A Raphael alone would have done so. Talent, genius, and art, appeared at once to break forth upon the world where ignorance had reigned. Ignorance had long fostered superstition, and superstition had cherished ignorance. Darkness had covered “the earth, and gross darkness the people.” The Spirit of the Lord was moving through the gloom, and when the time was fully come, and the professing church had too deplorably filled up the measure of her iniquity, “God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

Irrespectively of the great reformers, whose learning and mental powers astonish us in a more enlightened age, the chief thrones of the

world were at that period filled by illustrious monarchs, and their courts frequented by men of literature, and by artists whose productions may never yet have been equalled by their successors. Such sovereigns as Charles v. emperor of Germany, Francis i. king of France, Henry viii. of England, pope Leo x. of Rome, and Solyman the Magnificent, sultan of the Turks, would probably have cast some celebrity over the age in which they contemporaneously appeared ; but undoubtedly their times have cast additional celebrity over them. These powers kept one another in balance ; their great talents, equal valour, and abilities, were constantly in opposition, and prevented any one from gaining undue pre-eminence ; while they afforded to all such occupation as contributed materially to favour the progress of opinion, and the course of innovation. To stop these, a more powerful opposition would have been at once excited, had the reigning pope been more active and more persecuting than was Leo x., the munificent patron of the arts, the lover of literature, luxury, and pleasure.

This epoch was undoubtedly a most important one in the history of Europe ; it is one that marks the termination of what are called the “middle ages,” to a large portion of which the designation of “dark” may truly be given.

At the dawn of the sixteenth century, Europe appeared to be awaking to a general movement of mind ; a spirit of inquiry was aroused

and continued; passive obedience, en chaining mankind in the bonds of a blind superstition, was no longer universal; knowledge was increased, and it was still further extended by the use of the printing-press. The chief nations of Europe were in a transition state; and, if the vigorous minds that then threw off the long-prevailing lethargy, and dared to question the realities of the doctrines they were taught to believe, had not been guided into truth by the word of God, and by the power of his Spirit, undoubtedly they must have turned to infidelity as the result of their bold investigations.

Who, that reads the description of the court and clergy of Rome, when Luther visited it, during the pontificate of Julius II. (the predecessor of Luther's antagonist, Leo X.) but must see that the reformation was the only escape from infidelity:

What would probably have been the case with the reformers, had not the Spirit of God guided and sanctified the efforts of their minds, has too generally occurred in the land of which we write. In France, there have been, and are, men—yes, and even women also—of intellect too elevated to believe *all* that their church teaches, or to practise all it requires. They unhappily turn aside, disgusted with the externals which their religion presents; refuse to look for the truth that is overlaid with so much error; and, because required to believe too much, end in believing nothing. There are numbers who

are led to deny the Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on account of the ridiculous honours paid to the virgin Mary.

We must now trace the long and troubled course of events by which that reformation was prevented from being established in France, and pursue our history of Protestantism unconnected with the diversified events and characters of the German reformation.

The name of Francis I. is usually associated with ideas of all that is brilliant and dazzling. He possessed all the qualities which constituted what, in the language of his age, was called a chevalier. He was handsome, brave, generous, sensitive of honour, and desirous of glory. He possessed also that love of learning and of the fine arts which was becoming general in his time. His court—the gayest, the most brilliant and dissipated, perhaps, in the world—welcomed the men of letters, the great painters, and sculptors, which the age produced. Among the former were some who, it was said, were “inclining to Lutheranism;” and some who, in the universities of Paris, had learned or taught the truths of the gospel.

Francis, in the early part of his reign, saw only learned men in the professors of different religious opinions, and received and listened to them as such. The learned, but timid Erasmus, was invited to his court, and says that the king, by drawing thither the learned men who were inclining to Lutheranism, expected to adorn and distinguish his reign more magni-

ficiently than he could have done by trophies, pyramids, or most gorgeous buildings.

Many opposite characters were to be seen both in the court and family of Francis I. His admired and talented sister, the celebrated Margaret, was unlike her dissipated mother, Louisa of Savoy. Francis and Margaret present, in their younger days, the interesting portrait of an attached brother and sister, possessing the same intellectual tastes, the same personal attractions, and much the same natural dispositions. It was in her court when duchess of Alençon, that Anne Boleyn, who became one of her ladies, is supposed to have acquired, as it is said, "a taste for the reformed opinions," which she manifested at the court of Henry VIII. when, unhappily, she became maid of honour to the ill-treated queen Catharine.

The bishop of Meaux, who was the great friend, adviser, and correspondent of the princess Margaret, became a convert to Lefèvre's preaching, but not a separatist from the church of Rome. He erroneously believed that a faithful adherence to the doctrines and commands of the gospel was compatible with obedience to papal authority; but the sequel will show he was forced to choose between them.

Berquin, an officer of the king's household, was, in the fullest sense of the word, a Protestant, and, as such, was burned in Paris. Lefèvre, with the bishop of Meaux, and the reformer Farel, often conversed with Margaret,

the king's sister; and she became, there is every reason to believe, a sincere Christian, and a true friend to "the new opinions," as they were called, though they were as old as the gospel itself. She did what she could, in later days, to shelter the persecuted Protestants, and, in her fine old castle of Pau, a tower is yet shown, where, when queen of Navarre, she concealed the famous reformer Calvin.

The characters of persons who are attached to a party are sure to come down to posterity in portraits drawn by different hands. Thus, that of Margaret of Valois, who, by a second marriage, became queen of Navarre, when represented by the friends of the reformation, is quite unlike what it is when described by its adversaries.

The former say that, from the age of fifteen, "the Spirit of God began to be manifested in her, and to appear in all her actions;" while an opponent asserts that Margaret had "scarcely any religion, and patronised those whose religious views were most libertine and convenient, and who yet spoke uncharitably of the ignorance and ill-lives of the clergy."

Margaret was an authoress; some of the tales she wrote have been considered unsuited to the delicacy of a female pen, and some of her advocates deny that she was their author. Her subject was, the scandals of monastic life at that day; her wit was lavished on the ignorance, superstitions, follies, and vices that abounded among the professed religious orders.

The court of Francis used to make progresses, as it was termed, in the fashion of our queen Elizabeth, journeying through the kingdom with great pomp and pageantry; feasting at the nobles' castles, thus levying heavy contributions from them, and indulging in an excess of pleasures. When Margaret accompanied her brother on these occasions, a lively French author affirms that the princess wrote these tales in her litter as she travelled, and that his own grandmother was her attendant, and used to hold her writing-stand.

She wrote, however, some deeply spiritual poems. One collection of hers is called "Pearls of the Pearl of Princesses;" and another, "The Mirror of the Sinful Soul." Many will deem some of her writings interesting as an example of what has been called the religious novel.

These literary tastes naturally led both Margaret and her royal brother among the reformed party of Paris. But this intercourse appears to have been blessed by God to the spiritual good of the sister only; Margaret became the protector, and Francis the persecutor, of the French Protestants.

It was not, however, until their principles came too openly into collision with his that persecution commenced. For some time, Francis rather favoured than opposed them. He attended the discourses at the university, which was then resorted to by students from Germany, England, and other parts, who carried

thither the writings of Luther and other controversialists. He listened with pleasure to the freedom of intellectual conversation in his own palace, and called the learned persons he patronised his sons. But the principal step he took for the advancement, especially of biblical learning, was to found two professorships for Greek and Hebrew, at Paris. The learned Beza, for this act, places the portrait of Francis I. among those of the reformers, and says the place is due to him who, though a persecutor, was instrumental in that reform, by "banishing barbarism from the world."

A well-known anecdote relates, that, not long before this time, a monk, in preaching, exhorted his hearers to be careful of a newly-invented language, called Greek, and assured them that whoever learned Hebrew instantly became a Jew.

It seemed probable that Francis, at one time, especially under the influence of his sister, would have become the patron of learned and pious men among the reformed, and thus the Protestant religion might have been established in the kingdom. But it is also probable that the strictness of morals and manners then inculcated by the Protestants would have been a great obstacle to this dissipated king; and the grace of God must certainly have changed his heart, and reformed his life before he could, in sincerity, join with those who desired to take the doctrines and precepts of the gospel for a guide to their steps. But while such a change

as cannot be wrought by the will of man, might never have been effected in him, Francis might have aided the new-born church, simply from liberal feeling, and a desire to promote learning and intellect, were it not for some circumstances which seem to have exercised an adverse influence over his conduct in regard to his Protestant subjects.

The historian, Brantome, tells us that king Francis had some cause of complaint against the pope, and told his ambassador that, if his master did not change his conduct, he would act by the Protestants of his kingdom as Henry VIII. was doing in England. "Sire," replied the pope's ambassador, "you would then be the greatest sufferer; a new religion requires a new prince."

Francis meditated on the remark; his acute understanding perceived its force; and the historian adds that he embraced the ambassador, and loved him better for his advice. The king of France was an absolute sovereign, and wished to remain so. The reformation produced not only a religious, but a political revolution. Civil bondage is incompatible with religious freedom; religious bondage is friendly to political despotism.

The sovereigns of Europe who most opposed the reformation, did so chiefly on political grounds. Charles V. contended with the Protestants for their civil, still more than for their religious liberties. Such was the general cause of Protestant persecution when conducted by

governments, and not merely instigated by priestly bigotry.

Francis might have been rather confirmed in the fear thus implanted by the papal ambassador, from the commotion excited in Paris when he ratified with the pope his famous concordat, or alliance. It was thought so great an infringement on the liberties of the Gallican church, that the students of the universities not only went in procession to church to supplicate the protection of God for their country, but marched through the streets in armour, to show a readiness to protect it themselves; attacking, or threatening, even persons of rank who were executing the king's order.

To ratify this concordat, Francis appeared in the cathedral of Bologna, holding up the train of the pope: a singular position for a gay knight and gallant warrior! The Protestants for some time received, at least, the tacit protection of their sovereign. The opposition quickly raised against the preachers of the gospel by the priests and doctors of the Catholic theology met with no encouragement from him. The indignation which is always produced when light first encounters darkness was kindled at Paris.

The good old Lefèvre was convicted of the strange heresy of saying that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, and the woman who washed our Lord's feet with her tears, were three distinct women. An opinion that now is generally received, kindled then a vigorous con-

troversy. It reached even to England, and Fisher, bishop of Rochester, wrote against Lefèvre, who might have been burned for this imputed heresy concerning the three women, had not the king—probably smiling at the subject of persecution as well as at the persecutors—rescued the pious doctor from impending danger. Francis, at this time, if inclined to toleration, was full of indifference; he was a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God; a friend to learning rather than a protector of religion. In the midst of one of his gay progresses through his dominions, a party of angry doctors from Paris waited upon him, to complain of the heresy that now prevailed in the universities. Francis paused in his pleasures to listen to them, and replied:—

“ I am not willing that these men should be disturbed; to persecute those who teach would be to prevent men of letters from coming into our kingdom.”

Margaret had even nearly prevailed on him to invite the mild and excellent reformer, Melancthon, to his court, but the pernicious influence of cardinal Tournon, his chief adviser, prevented this step.

Though the king would not sanction the clamour of the doctors, Beda, the most violent of the opposers, continued all the species of persecution that was in his power; and though Lefèvre could not be burned, he was obliged to seek a calmer asylum than the university then afforded to him. Lefèvre left Paris,

and he was gladly received by the bishop of Meaux.

At Meaux, the gospel was preached for some time in peace; and from thence it was sent into the country around. Farel, also, came to join the church so happily flourishing at Meaux. A great work was accomplished there.

Lefèvre, anxious that the French should be able to read the Bible, published a translation, from the Latin, of the New Testament and the Psalms, nearly at the same time that Luther sent forth his translation in Germany. In both countries, the effect in diffusing the doctrines of the reformation was great.

Many a pious, but enslaved mind, had before then desired anxiously to obtain spiritual light and peace. When they could read the gospel in their own tongue, or hear it read, they learned that salvation is not of works but of grace, that men are justified freely through faith in Christ Jesus; and thus many found joy and peace in believing. The bishop of Meaux sent the princess Margaret a copy of the gospels, beautifully illuminated, after the ancient fashion, praying her to present it to the king her brother. "Such a present," he wrote to her, "coming from your hand, cannot but be agreeable. . . . The Scriptures are a royal dish, nourishing without corrupting, and healing all diseases; the more we taste of it, the more we hunger for it, with unceasing and insatiable appetite." At that moment, all eyes

appeared opened to the long-hidden treasures of the Bible: so great was the curiosity excited, that even Margaret's ungodly mother had portions translated for her.

Both Francis and his mother had thus the means of knowing the will of God; but their lives were not conformable to it, and it may be believed that, while the newly translated Bible might be regarded as a literary curiosity, it was not perused with diligence and sincerity. Had that king embraced the reformed faith, and favoured the Protestant religion in his kingdom, the history of France would probably have been different from what it has been: the moral power that France would have gained, together with her other advantages, would indeed have set her on high amongst the nations.

The good old doctor Lefèvre rejoiced beforehand, in the hope that such would be the case. A monk who heard his expressions of joy at what was occurring, and of hope for what he believed must take place, answered with indignation, that if such a change were likely to occur, his brethren would preach a crusade; and if the king permitted such proceedings, as Lefèvre spoke of, they would drive him from his kingdom. At Meaux, which had been the centre of light and truth to France, the peace was broken. The monks raised a clamour against the preachers of the gospel, and appealed to the bishop against his own friends. The bishop, for that time firm, though he after-

wards failed, preached against the monks from his pulpit. They carried their complaints to Paris, and denounced both the bishop and teachers of Meaux to the parliament.

The indiscreet zeal of a working man, named Leclerc, made the matter worse. Having been very useful in diffusing a knowledge of the truth, he was cruelly punished, and afterwards left the scene of his useful labours, finally retiring to Metz, another city where the gospel was gaining ground. Here he again provoked the persecutors' rage, and unhappily injured the cause he wished to serve, by going into a church, and breaking the images of saints. For this offence he was barbarously burned to death as a heretic, and died faithfully as a martyr.

We may regret that the zeal of the reformer should hurry the Christian beyond the meekness and gentleness of Christ ; we may remember that Paul did not demolish the altar which was dedicated "to the unknown God,"—and call to mind his words to the pagans—" Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious ;" but in the constancy of the martyr we have proof of his sincerity, and must deplore the fierceness of spirit which would count the demolition of a statue worth the sacrifice of a life. The fate of Leclerc has been frequently mentioned, as he was the first martyr of the reformation in France.

Finally, both Lefèvre and Farel were obliged to leave Meaux ; the bishop, unhappily, failed in the hour of trial, and retreated from the

storm of persecution to the shelter of Rome ; retracting the opinions which his church called heretical, and deserting the friends from whom he had received them. The congregation of Meaux was dispersed. The candlestick was taken out of its place, and the light that had shone from thence was carried to other lands.

The gallant Francis was defeated, and taken prisoner by the emperor of Germany, Charles v., at the famous battle of Pavia. He wrote to his mother : “ Madam, all is lost, except our honour.” During his tedious captivity, that queen possessed increased power against the Protestants of France. Desirous to conciliate the pope on behalf of the captive king, she wrote to ask his counsel with regard to the numerous heretics that infested the kingdom. The pope at once appointed an inquisition, or court of inquiry, and commanded that all persons who were declared by the bishops and judges guilty of heresy, should be delivered over to the secular power ; that is, sentenced to be burned to death.

Thus, then, commenced that dreadful persecution, which continued for such a length of time to deluge France with the blood of its own people. It is not our purpose to tell of the many heroic persons who now offered up their lives at the stake, refusing to purchase them back by a recantation of their faith.

The history of a poor hermit, who had heard the gospel from the preachers at Meaux, is remarkable. It was affirmed that, under pre-

tence of asking charity, he diffused the doctrines he himself believed. His quiet labours among his poor brethren were not overlooked ; he was only known as the hermit of Livry, and was dragged from his lonely dwelling in the forest of that name, and burned before the cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris, meekly saying his only hope was in the pardoning mercy of God, and his sole desire to die in the faith of Christ. His name was not recorded in history, but—far greater honour !—it was “written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

We are also told of a female martyr, a lady whose life had been spent in charitable works. As she went to the flames, the poor cried aloud, that she never more would bestow her charity upon them. “ Yet once more !” this heroic woman replied, and gave her shoes to a poor creature who had none.

In relating the sufferings of the French Protestants, it is not well to conceal, or deny, any cause they may have given for ill-will against them. Such was that improper step which Beza calls “ a very imprudent measure ;” namely, posting a placard on the palace-gates against the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, the doctrine held most sacred by that church, so that any one who assails it is deemed guilty of blasphemy. Such an act could only produce anger, without promoting conviction of error. Cardinal Tournon, it is said, was “ put by it into such a fury, that he would have exterminated all the Protestants if he had

had the power." The power which he had, however, he unsparingly used ; and as he was the king's first counsellor, it is not unfair to say, that to him must attach the chief responsibility of such deeds as were committed with a view to avenge this insult, not as shown to the king only, but, as the priests said, to the Almighty God, whose real body they erroneously affirm to be present in the sacrament.

It is from this time that we must view Francis I., now returned to Paris, in the dark character of a religious persecutor. Volatile and changeable as his disposition was, at one time inspiring the hopes, at another, inciting the fears, of his Protestant subjects, we should be utterly at a loss to account for the change in his conduct, and the barbarity of his actions, did we not know that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Contempt and disgust excited against the doctrines of the gospel assume the form of hatred against their professors. To this—to the indomitable pride of will, which would allow, even in the consciences of others, of no opposers to the fierceness of the age, and the cruel spirit of bigotry in his advisers, working on that pride which would not willingly grant his lowly subjects the right of thinking or acting otherwise than as he wished them, must be imputed the ferocity that marked his proceedings, and caused the gay and polished monarch of France almost to rival the Neros and Domitians of ancient Rome.

While the king and his whole court passed in procession to church, to make atonement for the insult offered to the holy sacrament, Francis, bare-headed, carrying a lighted taper in his hand, and the priest bearing the host, altars were erected in the streets, and before each altar—most horrible to write the words—Christians, called heretics, were seen burning in the flames, with circumstances of singularly invented cruelty, which it would be exceedingly painful, and unnecessary to transcribe. The king, handing his taper to the cardinal Tournon, knelt down and asked the blessing of Heaven on himself and his nation, while witnessing this fearful sacrifice to bigotry. It would be curious to trace, if we knew it, the process by which such a mind was conducted to this state.

At a splendid entertainment afterwards given, Francis declared that the most vigorous punishments should be inflicted on all who persisted in opposing either the will of the church, or his own will: and he called on all faithful men to denounce their nearest friends or relatives who were guilty of "such blasphemies," saying that "if his own children fell into such enormities, he would yield them up as the first sacrifice to God." On such an occasion, it was represented to him that heresy had already entered his own family in the person of his sister, Margaret. But Francis might find it more easy to promise sacrifices to his religion than actually to make them. He replied to the hint concerning his

sister: “ Speak no more on that point; my sister loves me too well to think otherwise than as I do.”

The queen of Navarre had made Gerard Rousel (a Calvinist,) bishop of Oléron, in the Pyrenees. He was preaching in a lay dress, when some indignant adherent to the church of Rome came behind him, and, with the blow of a hatchet, aimed probably at the narrow pedestal which supported the pulpit, knocked it down, and the bishop with it. The fall inflicted such an injury, that he died in consequence.

Cardinal Tournon, a statesman and politician, is chargeable as the great persecutor of this reign. It is singular that the eminent reformer, Calvin, was, in some degree, the means of increasing the persecution of Protestantism. That reformer had fled from Paris and taken refuge in various parts of France. Finally, leaving it altogether, he settled more tranquilly at Geneva, where Farel also had gone; and there, in security, he wrote his “Christian Institutes,” a work which he dedicated to his lawful sovereign, the king of France, praying him, at the same time, to have pity on his Protestant subjects. This work is said by a Roman Catholic writer to have been “the great support of heresy, as it systematized its doctrines,” and tended to make congregations keep together, even under the loss of ministers. The dedication of such a work to one who bore the title of “Most Christian Majesty,” was said by the cardinal to

be an insult, to show a contempt of his power, and of the religion he was appointed to uphold. The king's dislike to the Protestant religion was greatly increased by Calvin's work. The Protestants began to be called by the name of that reformer; but, in general, the singular name by which Protestantism in France was distinguished was that of "The Religion;" an emphatic appellation.

The utmost rigour was enforced against Protestants. The Bible had been circulated in the language of the country—the common, or vulgar tongue, as we express it. But now the priests made it a sin to pray in French; and a decree, prohibiting men to pray in their own tongue wherein they were born, was forthwith issued. It is well that of human beings, as well as of the stars of heaven, it may be said, "There is no speech nor language; without these their voice is heard," (Psa. xix. 3, margin.) God hears the prayer of the heart, if it be right in his sight, and the mere language of the lips is of little avail.

Tournon became the great inquisitor of France, in fact, though not in name. Secrecy became impossible, escape hopeless; the most cautious were discovered; the most daring were punished. Still, even at the stake, the gospel was preached, and the dying, amid flames, imparted new life to the living. The addresses of martyrs wrought many conversions. Their words came to the hearts of the hearers, accompanied by the force which sincerity

bestows, and, in some instances, were attended by the power of the Holy Spirit: the persecutors found that, when a martyr died, one more heretic, at least, was usually made. The sufferers were, in consequence, not allowed to speak, and the tongue of the bold Berquin was pierced before he suffered. The light of truth had, however, gone further than Paris; and the keen eye of inquisitorial bigotry unhappily followed it.

We have before spoken of the Protestant inhabitants of Merindol and Cabrières, the descendants of an interesting race; the settlements, most probably, of the ancient Albigenses, who appealed to Louis XII. as their sovereign, and who, whatever race they descended from, were in faith identical with the Vaudois of Piedmont, though inhabiting another territory. It has been before said, too, that these existing Protestants had affinity with the Protestants of a later age, those which the sixteenth century produced. Their subsequent and too brief history is recorded by a French abbé, an ecclesiastic of the Roman Catholic church; as such, we need not imagine that its details are overcharged.

The dwellers in the mountains of Dauphiné and Provence had made some converts; their zeal had probably been re-animated by what was going on in other parts. They were accused of innovation in the established religion, though it might seem that lives of hard-working and unwearied industry, such as they led, could

leave but little time for proselyting, however inclined they might be to convert their neighbours.

In the year 1545, permission was granted to the parliament of Aix to take active proceedings against these people, as heretics. "Everything was dreadful in the decree," says a French historian; "and everything was dreadful in its execution." Twenty-two towns or villages of these ill-fated districts were burned. The persons who escaped in the darkness of the night when the attack was made, were pursued to the rocks whither they fled, and barbarously slaughtered; old men, women, and children, all alike were murdered. At Cabrières, which was the chief town destroyed, seven hundred persons were killed; the women were shut up in a barn where straw was laid up, and all were burned together. The houses were pulled down; the whole district ravaged; and where industry had caused a garden to flourish, a waste wilderness was seen. A Jesuit, writing of this dreadful affair, says that above three thousand persons were killed; and above nine hundred houses destroyed.

Francis I. is said to have made inquiry, before he permitted this massacre, concerning the morals and doctrines of these Protestants, and to have heard that they were an unoffending and pious people, who, however, strenuously refused obedience to what they termed the superstitions of Rome. Perhaps their appeal to the predecessor of Francis, Louis XII., might

have given rise to this statement. We would willingly believe that this monarch was not guilty of such a deed, having such knowledge. Nevertheless, a Roman Catholic historian asserts that the space of three months was accorded to these innocent and unoffending people, "to amend their lives and doctrines," and, at the end of that time; recourse was had to fire and sword—thus exterminating what could not be amended.

The fugitives from these massacres wandered in rocks and forests, "destitute, afflicted, tormented." Some were taken, and others were killed; a number were sent to work in the galleys. An order was issued that no one should afford them food or shelter. Thus, some died of hunger; some, from eating the grass and herbs of the field, perished in sickness. In one way or another, the work was accomplished.

The approach of death—that grand remembrancer of the course of life—brought to the memory of Francis the unmerited sufferings of these people. He repented of having lent himself to that fell work, and, on his dying bed, charged his son to inquire into and punish the conduct of those who, he said, had exceeded his orders.

It would be beyond our scope to enter into an examination of this monarch's character, or to detail the varied and most interesting events of his reign. Foreign policy and priestly bigotry were alternately or unitedly the moving springs of his actions. We can only lament

that such natural endowments as he possessed were misapplied, and regret that this commencement of the reformation in France met with an enemy in one who might have proved an eminent friend. But we learn from the early history of Christianity, that the religion which is patronised from mere reasons of state, seldom remains pure; and we learn from still higher authority, that the King of kings holdeth in his Almighty hand the hearts of the children of men. In his sight, the great Francis I. was one of "the children of men," and, had it pleased His all-seeing wisdom, he would have put his bridle in his lips, and turned him back in the proud and cruel course he pursued against the Lord's people.

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY II. 1547—1559.

FRANCIS I. was succeeded by his son Henry. His court was divided into parties; but we need only pursue the history of two of these parties, namely, that of the Guises, and that of the queen, the too famous Catharine de' Medici. These are intimately connected with the troubled story of Protestantism in France.

On the accession of Henry II., the Protestants greatly increased. The existence of the rival parties, and the consequent occupation of the court, drew attention from them. Nobles and princes, to further their own interests, or strengthen their cause, began to conciliate them, but many persons of rank joined them from unworldly motives. Appearances, however, soon became adverse to the Protestants.

Catharine de' Medici acted but a minor part during the reign of her husband; she had a rival in the court, whose influence with the king was much greater than that of his domineering queen. This lady, the beautiful Diana of Poitiers, had her own party; she is said to have been a good Catholic, and a sincere

hater of “the religion.” The duke of Guise, and the cardinal of Lorraine, his brother, formed the most powerful party; ambition and love of power actuated both, but the defence of the Catholic and established church was their ostensible motive.

We shudder at the name of Catharine de' Medici, but it is only in the reign of her sons that that terrible woman's character becomes developed. Among all those court parties, the Protestants were not long left in doubt of their sovereign's conduct. The new reign was ushered in with rejoicings, but to these people the words of our Lord were verified: “Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.”

It is painful in these milder times even to glance over the horrible transactions of the past. We would fain believe that the world could no longer tolerate the hideous spectacle once exhibited upon it. Yet the spirit of bigotry is not extinct; and if history will inform us that the Protestants and reformers were guilty of some violence, it should not conceal or mitigate the barbarism and provocations of their adversaries.

Such is the reason for quoting the following extract from the French author, Mezerai. We shall not often repeat the description of such occurrences. It describes the scene which Paris presented on the entry of king Henry and his wife, Catharine de' Medici, after their coronation at St. Denis, A.D. 1549:—

“ The court passed almost all this year in joy and carousals. The king and queen made a splendid entry into Paris. . . . When the court was weary of these gay diversions, the scene changed, and piety succeeded to gallantry. A procession was made to the cathedral of Notre Dame, in which the king joined, in order to manifest, by this public act, his zeal to maintain the religion of his ancestors, confirming this evidence of his intentions by the frightful punishment of multitudes of miserable Protestants, who were burned on the Place de Grêve. They were fastened to beams with an iron chain and pulley, successively raised and plunged again into an enormous fire. The king chose to feast his eyes with this tragic sight ; but it is said that the cries of one of his own domestics, whom they tormented in this manner, so struck his imagination, that, all his life after, he was troubled by the recollection, which made him shudder and turn pale, as often as the image recurred.” “ It is certain,” adds the historian, “ that the people, seeing the constancy of the victims on the one hand, and the dissoluteness of the court on the other, called this justice a persecution, and this punishment a martyrdom.”

Political reasons, and a war with the great rival of Francis, the emperor Charles v., were the causes of suspending this persecution. Through the influence of the Guises, the foremost foes of Protestantism, Henry was induced to aid the Protestants of Germany in their

struggle against Charles. Such is the little weight that religion in general is found to have in reasons of state or of policy. A great relief to the suffering people was also accorded by an edict published at that time, which removed the charge of investigating their offences from the ecclesiastical to the secular courts.

Pope Julius III., who had made a cardinal of a boy that took care of a pet monkey, died in the year 1555. His successor followed him in a few days after his elevation. The memorable opponent of Martin Luther, Charles V., opposed the election of Paul IV., who, being notwithstanding chosen, declared that antagonist of Protestantism an enemy to the church, and promised to divide his conquests in Italy with whoever aided him in driving Charles from that country. The king of France was to have had his share; but, to the surprise of the world, the emperor and warrior, Charles V., suddenly resigned his crown, gave up his wealth, and retired to end his days as a monk in a Spanish monastery.

After the publication of Calvin's work before mentioned, the Protestant church in France almost entirely followed the model he proposed, the same which the Protestant church of Geneva, and much the same which that of Scotland, adopted. The season of peace now afforded to them, after thirty years of continued persecution, might allow an opportunity for organizing the constitution and outward

forms of their religious societies and services. While under the secular authority and protection, and while the attention of the state was directed to foreign affairs, Calvinism (for the French Protestants are as generally named Calvinists, from the reformer Calvin, who was a native of their country, as the German Protestants are named Lutherans) gained ground still more. At Lyons, it prevailed to a great extent. That city has, from the earliest ages of Christianity, been remarkable in the history of the church ; and its vicinity to Geneva, the head-quarters, as it might be called, of the reformers, rendered it likely to maintain its place in that of the reformation.

The first Calvinist church was now opened for Divine worship at Paris, and, instead of meeting privately to read the Scriptures, pray, and sing psalms, the Protestants openly assembled for the worship of God.

This state of things, however, was only allowed to last so long as the attention of statesmen and politicians was engrossed by other affairs. The bigotry of neither the clergy nor people could directly assail them without the aid of the law. The indignation of Rome at this toleration of heretics was soon aroused, and the cardinal of Lorraine found means to do away with all the indulgence which the edict before alluded to had afforded to the Protestants. The church could once more boast of pursuing vigorous measures for the suppression of heresy in France. Cardinal Tournon,

whom the parties at court had displeased, returned from Rome to superintend his diocese of Lyons, of which place he was archbishop. A Protestant church had also been erected there, and the cardinal found that a meeting, or synod, of the Protestant ministers was to be held in the city.

Five of these were immediately seized, and quickly sentenced to the punishment of heretics, burning alive: a singular sentence for the correction of religious error, if such were supposed to exist, and one which unhappily the clergy of Rome, who forgot that the weapons Paul used were not carnal, but spiritual, could plead for on the example of Calvin, who, they argued, condemned to a similar fate the heretic Servetus. So quickly will the error of God's servants be made use of by those who, as the prophet says, watch for their halting, Jer. xx. 10.

It is singular that the designation which Protestants are in the habit of giving to papal Rome, was at this time applied by Romanists to the alleged Protestant heresy of Geneva. "The cares of the archbishop," says cardinal Fleury, "were not fruitless; Lyons preserved its faith, in the midst of contagion, and in the vicinity of Babylon."

To assist the archbishop's efforts, not in his own diocese only, but throughout France, the most detestable aid was called in; that of the inquisition. The genius of France was not as friendly to that terrible institution as that of

some other lands ; it never obtained a firm footing there, and was of another character from what is known as the Spanish inquisition. The inquisitor of the faith in France was, however, armed with powers to terrify all who dared to believe less or more than the church of Rome prescribed.

A monk of the order of St. Dominic, the founder of the inquisition at the time of the Albigenses, was appointed to summon, by command of the pope, all accused heretics before his tribunal, to question and to condemn. A secret police was established, and employed in his service ; and thus the most private affairs of families were made known to the inquisitor.

By such means the expression of religious opinions, or sentiments, is most effectually prevented, as all becomes known, and, almost literally, it may be said, that what is spoken in the ear in closets is proclaimed on the house-tops. Distrust of every one is felt under the consciousness of such an all-prevailing power. The authority thus placed in the hands of a Dominican monk, by the head of their church, was not pleasing to the French clergy ; but the court approved of the papal proceedings, and the parliament was required by the king to sanction them.

That parliament which had shown a spirit of justice towards their oppressed fellow-subjects, used all their influence to prevent the establishment of these inquisitorial proceedings.

A spirited remonstrance was prepared, and delivered by the president before the king in council. "We abhor," said the bold orator, "the establishment of a tribunal of blood, where secret accusation takes the place of proof; where no forms of justice are observed, and where the accused are denied all means of defence. . . .

"Begin, sire, by procuring for the nation an edict (or law) which will not cover your kingdom with funeral piles; which will not be wetted either with the tears or blood of your subjects. At a distance from your presence, bowed down by the pressure of labour, or occupied in their arts and trades, they are ignorant of the proceedings now contemplated against them; sire, it is for them, and in their name, the court presents to you its humble remonstrance, and its fervent supplications. As for you, sirs," addressing the councillors of state, "you, who so quietly hear me, and possibly think you can have no interest in this question, it is fit you should be apprised of your mistake. So long as you enjoy royal and public favour, honours are heaped upon you; every one appears to respect you; no one thinks of assailing you. But the higher your elevation, the nearer you are to the thunder-bolt; and we should be strangers to history if we did not know the usual results of a disgrace. . . . But should such a misfortune befall you, you would still retain your personal properties, and retire to private life, consoled

by the hope of transmitting them to your children. If this edict passes, your condition will no longer be the same. You may, as has already been the case, have men to succeed you in office who are poor and rapacious; and who, not knowing how long they may retain their posts, will be glad to make use of your loss of favour to enrich themselves at your expense. They will then find it easy to do so. It will only be necessary to make sure of an inquisitor and two witnesses on their side, and, though you may be saints, you will be burned as heretics."

The effect of this bold speech—from which a few passages are here abridged—on Henry II. and his council, appears to have been very much the same as was produced on Felix the Roman, by the often-quoted reasoning of Paul; the councillors were impressed by it, and the passing of the edict was deferred to a more convenient season. Unhappily, that season was soon made convenient to those who waited for its coming.

Notwithstanding the strongest prohibitions, the writings of the reformers of Germany found their way into France, and even into the French army. In the German war, the latter was brought into closer contact with Protestants, and some officers of rank are said to have thus received "their first taste for the new religion."

The religion, called "new," was, however, as old as the gospel of Christ; it only

awoke from a long sleep at the reformation.

The Protestant party still increased in France; and as, in the days of early Christianity, there were saints in Cæsar's household, so in the court, camp, and council of Henry II. were numbers of that very sect to be found against which his zeal, or animosity, was constantly excited. In the court of queen Catharine, the first ladies were of the reformed faith. The very difficulty and hazard of attending Protestant worship caused it to be more frequented by the nobility of the court. A religion that allowed of inquiry, that demanded the free exercise of the mind, employed its energies, and appealed to common understanding, was much more suited to the character of the French people, than one which allowed of no deviations from the decrees and interpretations of the church; which required passive mental obedience, and forbade even the reading of the Bible, lest an intelligent person should understand it erroneously.

Alas! have not subsequent times fully justified this remark, and shown the futility of thus attempting to shackle the human mind? Bursting the bands of a superstitious obedience, the people of France rushed into a frightful infidelity, and renounced, in their country, both religion and the church.

Every considerable religious movement has generally political adherents. It will be well to bear in mind that this was the case with

Protestantism in France, in a period subsequent to the one we now speak of. In the succeeding reigns, we shall see the Protestants made use of - as a political party, and their history, consequently, rendered different from what it would probably have been as merely a religious one.

A mere love of freedom also, led many to join the ranks of Protestantism; and, instead of a scanty and faithful band of the hidden children of God, the French Protestants were seen rising into a powerful and opposing body in the state. The history of their conflict is long.

A circumstance occurred at Paris which created a great sensation in Protestant Germany as well as at the Vatican. Above four hundred people met in a private house to celebrate the Lord's supper; the house was assailed by the mob, and the persons in the neighbourhood put lights in their windows, in order that the poor creatures who endeavoured to escape might be seen, and murdered. A number were killed; a magistrate, with a party of soldiers, interfered, and took the rest prisoners; thus saving them from instant destruction. The pope, hearing the tidings, demanded that they should be burned, and the German princes petitioned for their release. The king wanted soldiers, and so he only delivered five of these people to the flames.

A fresh misfortune to the Protestant cause occurred through the national triumphs of the

duke of Guise. The most gratifying, if not the most important of these, was the retaking of Calais from the English, after it had been in their possession, as the sole remnant of their extensive conquests in France, for the space of two hundred years; a loss to England which caused the well-known saying of our queen Mary, that, at her death, the name of Calais would be found written on her heart.

The Protestants of France had, however, more cause than the queen of England to deplore the triumphs of the duke of Guise. The public favour bestowed on him gave new power to that ambitious family, and to the Roman Catholic party, of which he, and the cardinal of Lorraine, his brother, were the head and leaders. The edict for the establishment of the inquisition was easily procured by the influence of the latter. The resistance of the parliament now only went so far as to control the power of the inquisitors, by allowing the accused, if laymen, the right of appealing from the sentence of the ecclesiastical court. The presidents of this tribunal were three in number, the cardinal of Lorraine, the cardinal of Bourbon, and the cardinal of Chatillon. We shall see the last acting a very different part in the history of his country.

An occasion was not long wanting to employ the energies of this court for the suppression of heresy. The principles of the reformation in France began, as we have seen, in the university of Paris. The "new opinions," as

they were called, had been first promulgated by men of intelligence and learning; they were received and perpetuated by men of similar minds; the students from Germany and England tended to continue the work which Lefèvre and Farel had begun. The spirit of freedom, kindled among the students, did not always confine itself to religious discussions, and quarrels with the monks of an adjoining abbey were the result.

A pleasant promenade, called in French, *Le Pré aux Clercs*, or, in English, the Clerks' Meadow, was the favourite resort both of monks and students: but the disputations which took place there were no longer confined to theology; the students and monks fought, not for a dogma or a doctrine, but for the sole possession of the Clerks' Meadow. The monks were finally beaten; but blood had been shed in the contest. The students held possession of their conquest, and their discussions were freely carried on there. The Clerks' Meadow became the great resort of the Protestants of Paris, where their meetings were held in the open air. They assembled there in crowds, as the French people are still in the habit of doing in the public promenades. The practice of singing psalms here in the evening gave additional celebrity to this quiet spot. It was frequented by persons of the highest rank; the most noted of these were the king and queen of Navarre; the latter not the literary and pious sister of Francis I., but her daughter, who now filled her

place, the truly Protestant Jeanne d'Albret, who, with her husband, will soon appear more prominently in the eventful story of Protestantism in France.

In these, perhaps, their happiest days, they took great pleasure in listening to the sacred music in which hundreds of voices united. The Psalms had been lately translated into French verse, by a poet of the court, whose muse, in general, was devoted to dissimilar subjects. They were set to music, and had become, from their novelty, so singularly fashionable, that the king is said to have gone out hunting, singing the beautiful forty-second psalm, beginning in our version :

“ As pants the hart for cooling streams,
When heated in the chase,
So longs my soul, O God, for thee,
And thy refreshing grace.”

And even Catharine de' Medici, when her proud spirit was kept down by a haughty rival, took pleasure in listening, in her own court, to those sweetly plaintive strains of Israel. The Protestants, however, it is to be hoped, viewed these psalms in a different light, and sang them with a different spirit; and probably this was the cause of their going out of fashion with the dissipated people of the court, who would have nothing to do with these psalms when they became a part of the Calvinistic worship. As such, indeed, they were afterwards prohibited as heretical, and were only to be heard in the pleasant retreat of the Clerks' Meadow. The

spectacles and dances, so much frequented in the gay capital, were forsaken by numbers who frequented in preference this place of Protestant assembly; and it is affirmed that one night upwards of a thousand persons followed the king and queen of Navarre to their house, singing these sweet psalms; to which, though prohibited by the Roman church, many who were not of the Protestant faith listened with pleasure. That faith, indeed, was found, more or less, to pervade every class, the court and the army, the parliament, and even the Roman church.

The evening assemblies in the Clerks' Meadow were pronounced by the ecclesiastical tribunal to be unlawful and seditious. The parliament declined to interfere; and the refusal confirmed the cardinal of Lorraine in his belief that the taint of heresy infected that body. He devised a deceitful means of finding out if such were the case, and prepared his royal master, if so, to root it out. He urged Henry to hold a council, in order, apparently, to consult on the best measures to pursue with his heretical subjects, and to cause some plan to be submitted to the council which should draw forth the real opinions of its members. The advice said to have been given to the king on this occasion, as it is recorded by a contemporary historian, scarcely bears the stamp of truth; we would willingly believe it is too horrible to be given by even the cardinal of Lorraine. It is enough to say that the king went to his parliament with-

out giving any notice of his intentions, and resolved to find out what heretical members it contained. His entrance caused great surprise, and at first created alarm; but, dissembling his sentiments as he had been advised to do, he descended from his kingly dignity to employ the meanest deceit; assured his parliament that he felt no ill-will to any man who had embraced the opinions of “the new religion,” but, on the contrary, wished them all to express their opinions freely on the measures proposed to their consideration, or to suggest such as appeared to them more expedient.

* With the memory of the open, chivalrous Francis I. still before them, it is not to be wondered at, if some of the councillors really were deceived, and believed the son of that monarch clear of such an artifice in order to ensnare them. Two of them especially, named Dubourg and Faur, spoke their sentiments plainly. The former, alluding to the gross iniquity of the times, said, that while such sinfulness was unreproved by the clergy, other men were brought to the stake for the crime of praying to God in their own language. And Faur, fixing his eyes on the cardinal of Lorraine, had the boldness to say, “Let us begin by seeking for the real author of these troubles, lest the same answer might be made to some of us as once was made to Ahab, ‘It is *thou* that troublest Israel.’” One president took an opposite tone, and highly praised the memory of king Philip Augustus, who had burned six

hundred heretics in one day. Henry, however, had found out what he wanted to know; he rose up in a terrible passion, cast a significant look to the two obnoxious councillors, and made a sign to the captain of his Scotch guards, count Montgomery, who was afterwards to act so singular a part in the tragedy which our history presents. The king's look explained his wish; Dubourg and Faur were instantly arrested and lodged in prison.

The most violent proceedings were immediately commenced against all who were known to be Protestants. Henry was impatient to see Dubourg at once condemned to death; but, meantime, his anger took a more extended range. He formed the determination of annihilating Protestantism in his kingdom, even by the destruction of all his Protestant subjects. The prisons of Paris were soon full; persecution raged everywhere; spies were paid for informations; and no shelter was afforded to a Protestant head, for whoever concealed the criminal was implicated in the crime. Protestantism, however, was to survive for even greater conflicts.

The conclusion of this part of our history reminds one of the striking narratives of the Old Testament, and the remarkable deliverances of God's people which we read of there.

While the trembling Protestants and the betrayed councillors awaited their death-warrant, feasting and revelling reigned in the palace and in the court: the city of Paris rejoiced.

The marriage of the princess Elizabeth, the unhappy daughter of Henry II., was to seal the peace with Spain, and to be celebrated at Paris with all pomp and splendour. The terrible Alva, the adversary of the Protestant Netherlanders, was to convey the princess to her dark-minded and bigoted husband, Philip II. The cardinal of Lorraine is said to have advised Henry to do the king of Spain and his general a pleasure by burning some of his heretical councillors to death. Whether the advice were given or not, it is certain that such a spectacle would have been exhibited had not the persecutor been suddenly stopped short in his course. Just one fortnight after the king's treacherous visit to his parliament, and while the obnoxious councillors were momentarily expecting death, he held a gay tournament in honour of his daughter's marriage. The chief nobility, according to a fashion even then rapidly disappearing, displayed on this occasion their skill in arms, by mock encounters, which were sometimes attended with serious results. King Henry himself was one of the combatants, and was, of course, allowed to consider himself the victor in all contests.

Elated with success, and in high spirits from the excitement, he saw he had broken every lance but two of those which were to be engaged in the lists. He called on count Montgomery to take one of these, and, in the language of the olden time, "to do him battle." Montgomery, it is generally admitted, endeavoured to decline

the honour, and refused the trial of skill. The queen is said to have shown great uneasiness at the proposal, and joined her entreaties to Henry to desist from further tilting. Catherine de' Medici pursued the strange, and, it would seem, unholy science, called astrology, which, in the dark ages of the world, was productive of so much evil, by pretending to foretell events, which the very prediction was designed to suggest or accomplish. An astrologer, it is said, had predicted to the king a violent death in single combat. Whether the prediction were ever made or not, it is well known that impressions have at times foreshadowed coming events upon the mind—impressions which are, doubtless, often the warnings of God's providence.

Both the queen and Montgomery would have deterred Henry from his purpose; but, obliging the captain of his guards to take a lance, their horses rushed against each other. The visor of the king's helmet was displaced by the shock, and the lance of his antagonist entered his left eye. Henry fell from his horse, and never spoke again, though he lived for eleven days.

Thus died Henry II., by a stroke, generally believed, at the time, at least, to be accidental, from the hand of the man who, but a few days previously, had been made the instrument of his injustice against his Protestant councillors. Had not his life been thus taken from the earth, it is probable that the Protestant church

in France would have been almost utterly extirpated by him. As it was, that church survived even more disastrous days; more disastrous, not to temporal peace and outward prosperity, but to the growth and cultivation of "the fruits of the Spirit," which had adorned it, but which, in the license and misery of civil war, in the rage of faction, and the violence of recriminating vengeance, retire from observation, and only exist hidden among those who are kept from the evil that is in the world.

In the reign of Henry II. the lives of the Protestants appeared in strong contrast with those of their adversaries. They numbered among them the most intellectual and thinking people, the most refined minds of a gross and ignorant age, the most decent, orderly, and virtuous of the community. The historian, Mezerai, gives another picture of the morals of their adversaries. "Almost every vice which tends to the ruin of a state prevailed in the court—luxury, immodesty, blasphemy, libertinism, and that most impious science which leads the curious to pry into the secrets of futurity by the detestable illusions of magic."

CHAPTER V.

FRANCIS II. 1559—1560.

So many celebrated persons begin now to be closely connected with the history of Protestantism in France, that a slight description of some of them is required to render it intelligible and interesting.

The reigning monarch, Francis II., was the most insignificant of these. He was about sixteen at the time of his father's death, but the laws of France ended the minority of sovereigns in their fourteenth year. This unhappy youth possessed a cold heart, an infirm body, and a weak intellect. Though only sixteen when he ascended the throne, he had been previously married to the beautiful Mary Stuart, whose lamentable death, as queen of Scots, left a dark spot on the glories of our Elizabeth's reign.

Of a totally different character from the young reigning couple, was the king's mother, the terrible Catharine de' Medici, whose name posterity will probably never tire of recording, as one which sums up all that is contrary to that of woman. She was apparently totally

devoid of feminine feeling, and utterly divested of principle. In her breast the desire for power stifled every other; to gratify this ruling passion, every private affection and public duty was unscrupulously sacrificed. Her whole life, from the time of her husband's death, was one contest for power, which she had not abilities sufficient to grasp at once, or which the superior power of opposing factions prevented her from retaining. Craft and deceit formed the basis of her policy. She brought up her sons, who were more or less her victims, on the maxim of that extraordinary tyrant, Louis xi. : "He who knows not how to dissimulate, knows not how to reign;" but, added to this, was the still more forcibly impressed maxim of entire subserviency to their mother.

She was the friend or foe of the Protestants, just as it suited her own ends: at one time, writing of them, or speaking to them, in terms which might appear dictated by all the sincerity of conviction; at another, pursuing them with a hatred which reached even beyond death. "When she called any one friend," says a witty historian, "it was a proof that she thought the person a fool, or was very angry, so that a gentleman used to say to her, 'Have the goodness, Madam, to call me enemy.'" She acted herself on the weak and wicked policy expressed in the saying, "Divide and govern." She fomented the divisions of the kingdom, and tried to prevent any party from

becoming too powerful, in order that her own authority might be paramount. More secret, if not darker crimes, are imputed to her than those which met the light of day. She is supposed to have practised those arts of poisoning for which her native land—Italy—was once celebrated. Yet her appearance was as deceitful as her nature. Her countenance—that usual index to the soul—was soft and mild. “She was fair and beautiful, of a majestic presence, gentle and sweet in manner, and of a most excellent grace.” Her daughters were renowned as women of great beauty, and her hands, which were dyed in blood, were unusually well-formed.

As it often happens to crafty and deceitful people, however, Catharine’s arts usually recoiled upon herself. Her life, on the whole, must have been as miserable as sin and foiled ambition could render it. During the reign of her husband, Henry II., whose accession to the throne she is said to have procured by poisoning his elder brother, she was subjected to the greatest trial and mortification a proud wife or queen could suffer. She saw her rights and influence usurped by a rival, who yet might not, perhaps, contend effectually for the palm of beauty with her, and who, though many years older than the king, maintained, from his youth, the most powerful ascendancy over his feelings. The influence of Diana of Poitiers was retained until the death of Henry. The power which Catharine could not acquire by means of her

husband, she exerted over her sons. She inspired the three princes who successively filled the throne of France with an early awe of their imperious mother. The unhappy queen of Spain said once, that she always trembled when she received a letter from her mother, lest, though so far removed, and subject to other authority, she might unconsciously have given her cause of offence. All her children were thus trained up in habits of awe, deference, and submission to her dictates.

In the instance of Francis, the eldest, his mother's influence was lessened by his love for his fascinating and most unequally-matched wife, Mary of Scots, who engrossed the only attachment he had ever been known to feel.

Two other prominent persons have been already mentioned, but will henceforth come more constantly before us. These are, the celebrated duke of Guise, and his brother, the cardinal of Lorraine.

We need not speak here of the great military genius which made the renowned duke the idol of his country ; we must regret that the humanity of disposition, and gentleness of manners, which added lustre to his foreign conquests, were so much laid aside during the political fury of the civil war, in which the Protestants and their interests were blended, and in which he was the almost invincible champion of the Roman Catholic party. His attachment to his religion, so far as it went, appears to have been sincere ; but his hatred

of Protestantism was probably merely that of a worldly and ambitious man, who saw a powerful party arising in the kingdom, and even invading the state, threatening the ancient institutions on which his own interests were built up, and encroaching on the wealth and power of such families as his own. His brother, the cardinal, would share such sentiments, and instigate such resentments. Do we impute to this cardinal the narrow spirit of bigotry, or, in a churchman, the unholy one of ambition ? It must appear to be chiefly the latter. The sacred name of religion has, from the oldest times, been often made “a cloke of malice-
ness.”

To the bigotry and oppression of this cardinal, the chief part of the miseries of France during the civil war are attributed. Yet his character has been described by a Roman Catholic, though, it must be owned, most unbigoted writer, in the following terms :— “ Though he was hated by the Huguenots for his religion, yet was he esteemed a great hypocrite, using religion chiefly as a means of building up his greatness.” In prosperity he was very insolent and proud, but in misfortune so mild and gracious, that one of the queen’s young ladies, knowing that, when he was low in the world, he sought and courted every one, would say to him when he graciously addressed her, ‘ Tell us what has befallen you ? certainly some misfortune has happened.’ ” The cardinal, however, was learned and eloquent ;

his great talents were zealously devoted to the extermination of Protestantism, whatever might be the ruling motive that put them into operation ; and the means he used in their service were most unscrupulous.

Next we must mention the old constable Montmorency, who had been prime minister to Henry II., contrary to the express wish of his dying father, Francis I. Montmorency was a harsh-tempered and superstitious man, but appears to have possessed a greater degree of principle and conscientiousness than most of the persons who acted a conspicuous part at this eventful time. The description which the lively writer before quoted, who was his contemporary, gives of him, has unhappily had its parallel in history, though recorded in graver terms. “ The constable Montmorency,” he says, “ never failed in his devotions, nor ever missed a paternoster ; for whether on horseback, or elsewhere, or in the field with the armies, he ever muttered his prayers as occasion presented, and would still keep crying out to his followers, ‘ Hang up such a one to a tree—Fire on the rascals who resist the king’s order—Burn me that village—Ravage all the district.’ Such like words of justice or war he used without ever ceasing his paternosters, until they were finished, thinking it a great sin to omit any of the number until the whole were ended, on any occasion whatsoever, and at the proper hour ; so very conscientious was he ! ”

Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, has been named among the Protestants of the last reign, and will occupy a more conspicuous place in those that follow. We must see him, however, deserting their ranks. His character has been so well described by native historians of the age, that their words are transcribed without note or comment. "He was a man of a fickle and irresolute disposition, taking one side, and changing to the other. The opinions he renounced always appeared to him the best. In religion he fluctuated, as in other things ; was neither a good Catholic, nor a stedfast Lutheran." Such a vacillating disposition, always injurious to its possessor, combined with the extreme selfishness and worldly policy of the king of Navarre, rendered him an untrue friend, or a mischievous enemy to the Protestant cause.

A totally different character was his wife, the truly Protestant Jeanne ; perhaps it might be said the most uncompromising Protestant, in the legitimate sense of the term, that her generation produced.

Without dwelling on a subject which we should be obliged to pursue to too great a length, we must proceed to mention the great leaders of the Protestant cause. The first of these, as opposed to Guise, is admiral Coligny ; pre-eminent, indeed, in every way. Next his brother, Andelot. Another brother of these Protestant leaders was the cardinal Chatillon. The first two have been much celebrated in

history, though, of course, their actions and motives would be greatly misrepresented by the prejudice of the party to which they were so long and so vigorously opposed.

Coligny had done good service to his king and country in foreign war, before he was called, by circumstances which it appeared impossible to resist, to put himself at the head of the Protestants, and finally to become, in fact, the leader of the armies of the civil war.

Liberty, for himself and fellow-subjects, to exercise the rites of the religion they professed, was all that he declared he wanted to obtain. He was unwilling to secure this by means of the sword; a Christian must always be so. "Men of blood shall not live out half their days." "If we have our religion," Coligny used to say, "what more do we want?"

He was always what is termed "a religious man," having been a good Catholic before he became a good Protestant. He had maintained a number of priests on his estates for the instruction of the people, and founded schools for the same purpose.

Admiral Coligny was led to embrace the reformed opinions chiefly by means of his brother, Andelot, and then he substituted Protestant ministers and teachers in place of those of the church of Rome.

Though very cautious, he was of a decided character, and would not, like the king of Navarre, easily forsake an opinion he had once positively formed. He possessed great courage,

and a perseverance which was only stimulated by difficulty.

His religion was not that of party spirit, nor made subservient to politics. His domestic life proved this. In his family and house the reformed worship was daily observed. His wife, a Protestant lady, of decided religious principles, also maintained the strictest decorum, so that the mansion exhibited a striking contrast to the frivolity and disorder that prevailed generally in the establishments of the nobility.

The admiral's brother, Andelot, was of a different character, more ardent, incautious, and enthusiastic. The brothers—as is often the case, between persons of opposite temperaments—were fondly attached. "They loved, aided, and supported each other." The fraternal affection of Andelot was shown in his desire to impart to the admiral the religious truth he had himself learned. The French historian tells us, in his own way, how this was acquired.

Andelot had been taken prisoner in Piedmont, in battle, and was confined in the castle of Milan. "It was there," says this Roman Catholic writer, "that he learned his fine religion; for having no other exercises, he set himself to read, and had all sorts of books brought to him, the inquisition not being then so strict as it has since become. And thus he learned the new religion, though indeed he had got the first scent of it before in the Protestant

wars in Germany. . . . Such are the sad fruits of idleness ; and so many evil things doth it teach us which we have cause for ever to repent of."

It was, most probably, the works of the reformers, which thus amused or employed the "idleness" of Andelot. There is every reason to believe that, while yet a prisoner in person, he received in spirit the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free.

" He is the free-man whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides."

His noble answer to Henry II. has been reserved for this place. That king, having heard that this gallant officer, who was colonel-general of the French infantry, had used some expressions which the cardinal of Lorraine thought ought not to be allowed utterance, sent for Andelot in private, and questioned him as to his religion.

" Sire," he replied, " I can use no disguise in matters of conscience, neither can I deceive my God in those of religion. You can dispose of my life, of my property, and of the offices I hold : but my soul is subject only to the Creator from whom I received it, and whom, in this respect, it is my only duty to obey as my Almighty Master. In a word, I would rather die than go to mass."

We can scarcely believe that a king could be so base as to strike with his sword the man

whose moral courage was thus evinced. Henry was not guilty of killing Andelot ; he sent him to prison, and deprived him of his rank in the army. His pardon was finally effected, though the pope insisted on his condemnation.

Two other brothers, who took a conspicuous place in the troubled annals of the time, were as unlike as the Colignys. These were the king of Navarre, and his brother, the prince de Condé, who, as the commander-in-chief of the Protestant army, should, perhaps, have been placed before the two former.

But Condé was certainly more a political than a religious leader of the French Protestants. He was ambitious, lively, witty, brave, generous, excessively fond of pleasure, beloved, notwithstanding his faults, and admired in spite of his errors. He was poor, yet generous and unselfish ; and his wife, who was a firm Protestant, was greatly attached to him.

Such were the chief personages who are now to act a principal part in the history of Protestantism in France. It remains only to mention the manner in which parties stood at the accession of Francis II.

Mary queen of Scots, the wife of this feeble sovereign, was the niece of the duke of Guise and of the cardinal of Lorraine. That unhappy young king was wholly devoted to her, as was she likewise to her uncles. Under such circumstances, it is easy to see that the hopes of the Protestants, if raised by the death

of their late persecutor, must soon be crushed by his successor. The king would inevitably become a mere instrument in the hands of the proud and ambitious Guises.

The next personage of rank, the power-loving queen Catharine, found herself released from an unhappy marriage. A desire for vengeance on her presumptuous rival was natural to an unchristian mind, and during the first changes caused by the death of king Henry, the Guises, to conciliate her favour, co-operated in this desire. Montmorency, who was the near relation of that rival, was also their political enemy, and, to keep him from obtaining favour with the young king, they instantly sent to summon the king of Navarre and the Bourbon princes to court, not hesitating, at the moment of this crisis, to call in Protestant support, if it would serve their own purposes. Catharine's enmity expelled both Montmorency and her rival, Diana ; but the result was not gratifying to that thirst for power which appeared destined to be mocked. When Montmorency was removed, the uncles of the young queen closed all access to the throne except by their means. They got the boyish monarch completely into their power, and usurped, in fact, the supreme authority, leaving him with the sceptre of royalty in his hand to enforce their decrees.

Thus Catharine found herself opposed to more formidable rivals in power. The constable Montmorency, who was now expelled

from court and from power, was uncle to admiral Coligny and his brothers. Burning with indignation at the contempt thus poured on his age, he looked to them as his avengers on the haughty Guises ; but they were now at the head of the Protestant party, and no consideration, or provocation, could induce the stern old minister to join that hated sect. In this he showed that degree of principle which other courtiers were found to want.

The king of Navarre, who had been called to court, arrived there too late ; the Guises were already in power. According to the fashion of the time, when a visitor of consequence was expected at court, the king went out to hunt in the direction it was thought he would come, and met him as if by accident, so conducting him to the palace with all honour. But, on the arrival of the king of Navarre, Francis had been sent to hunt in a contrary direction ; the undesired guest arrived alone, and was ill received.

In this dilemma, Navarre had recourse to queen Catharine, who, finding the power of the Guises most adverse to hers, and, fearing the further attempts of their ambition, took part with the insulted monarch, and expressed herself in favour of the Protestants.

The king of Navarre was of too undecided a disposition at once to take a prominent part as the leader of a party, but his brother, the prince de Condé, more readily did so. He was connected both with Montmorency and

Coligny, and thus political leaders were given to what had hitherto been a purely religious contest.

The very first proceeding with regard to the Protestants, on the accession of Francis, or rather on the cardinal of Lorraine's coming into power, showed what treatment they might expect. The councillor Dubourg, after a trial, which he prolonged by pleading, was sentenced to death. He was hung, and his body burned. During his trial, his judge had shown so much of personal enmity, that the innocent man warned him of the fact, that he must soon appear at a tribunal where no injustice can take place. Very soon after, this judge was shot, it is supposed, by a Scotch gentleman, named Robert Stuart. The Protestants were accused of having instigated the deed; but, though tortured to extract confession, Stuart refused to criminate himself or any one else. He escaped death, and we shall yet hear more of him.

A cruel persecution was again carried on: the tribunal of the inquisition even exceeded its former zeal. Informers daily brought reports, and the judges of heresies, tried, convicted, and executed them, with astonishing celerity. Another means of discovering the Protestants was found out. Images and pictures of the virgin Mary are common both in the streets and highways of Roman Catholic countries. The people of France were led to assemble before these to practise their devotions.

Passers-by were invited to join in worship, and all such as refused were subjected to immediate violence, or to the greater danger of being denounced to the tribunal. The cardinal of Lorraine now possessed unbridled power. The duke of Guise was at the next step to the throne, to which he was suspected of aspiring. Even the princes of the blood were cast into the shade, and the haughty temper and violent passions of the cardinal gave offence to many of the leading Roman Catholics. As the tyranny of the Guises offended, or mortified, the courtiers and nobles, the ranks of the Protestants were externally increased by numbers who joined them from political discontent.

In this cause originated the unhappy conspiracy of Amboise; which, if it had been successful, might have spared France much blood; but, as it was the reverse, only caused more to be shed. There is something in the very name of conspiracy at which the mind revolts; yet the object of this was not bad; it was to release the weak young king from the thraldom of the Guises, and to drive these ambitious men from the government. "Three kinds of persons," says Beza, the Calvinist historian of the time, "engaged in the affair; the first moved by a righteous zeal to serve God, their prince, and country; others, incited by ambition or love of change; the third, urged by desire of vengeance on account of injuries received from the Guises, either by

themselves or their friends. Such being the case, we need not marvel if there were confusion in the conduct of the enterprise, and a tragic termination put to it."

The prince de Condé is believed to have been at the head of this plot, but secretly, and under the stipulation that nothing should be attempted to the injury of the king, or the royal family. There was, however, an under agent employed, whose history, as well as that of the disclosure of the plot, reminds us of Guy Fawkes. The name of this man was De Barri. He had fled from France owing to a charge of forgery, and at Geneva had mixed with Protestants who had left their native land, or been exiled from it. He was, therefore, it is supposed, employed by the political leaders of this movement, to engage the co-operation of the Protestants of France.

In a full assembly, he stated the plan that was in contemplation, and having sworn that he would do nothing against the royal family, but defend to his latest breath the majesty of the throne, the authority of the laws and liberty of the land against all foreigners, his proposal of proceeding against the Guises, and for the deliverance of the king, was answered by a universal cry, "We swear." All present took an oath of fidelity, embraced one another in tears, denouncing severely whoever should treacherously betray their purpose. Unfortunately, their chief, or at least the agent of their chiefs—for the great names were never

distinctly made known—was the first, through incaution, to betray this secret. He disclosed it to a friend with whom he lodged when at Paris. The friend quickly informed the secretary of the duke of Guise, and instant measures were taken to obviate a danger, the precise nature of which was not, however, made known.

Admiral Coligny and Andelot were desired by Catharine to appear at court. The admiral, who is universally said to have been ignorant of the plot, obeyed the summons without hesitation, and took occasion to plead the cause of the Protestants, representing so forcibly the impolicy of continuing the penal laws against them, that an edict was drawn up rather more in their favour. But four days only then intervened before the attack of the conspirators was to be made on the castle of Blois, where the king then was. The Guises removed him for greater security to that of Amboise, not far distant from Blois, and on the river Loire.

The conspirators assembled ; but, in consequence of the duke's precautions, their enterprise entirely failed. After a desperate struggle, De Barri was shot, and escaped a more cruel death.

The vengeance taken by the government almost exceeds belief. More than one thousand two hundred men were slaughtered in the small town of Amboise, and when the executioners were weary of slaying, the poor creatures were bound and cast into the river Loire, which runs by the castle. On its battlements many

were hung, and others were tortured to procure a confession which should implicate the Colignys and the prince de Condé. But this object was not attained.

The baron de Castelnau was one of the most illustrious of these sufferers. He was taken prisoner with fifteen followers, and submitted to the torture, after the barbarous fashion which only slowly gave way before the influence of the principles diffused by the reformation. But nothing could force him to declare that the purpose of the conspiracy was otherwise than to overthrow the usurped authority of the Guises ; which intention they all declared was a lawful one. The baron defended his religious opinions with so much ability, that the chancellor, who acted from fear rather than from conviction in judging him, tauntingly asked where he had studied theology.

The baron replied, " You know well where I studied theology, for after my imprisonment in Flanders I told you I had there studied the Scriptures. . . . Have you forgotten how you then praised my study, and advised me to attend the assemblies at Paris ? Did you not then say I had chosen the better part ? Can you then dare, thus trembling on the verge of the grave, to please that cardinal, after having by God's grace received the knowledge of the truth, deny your religion, and renounce your conscience and your duties ? Was it not enough that you lent yourself, contrary to your conscience, to the destruction of the harmless

congregations of Merindol and Cabrières ? Did you not with tears declare that for that offence God had rejected you ? Unhappy man, you have denied your God and his word !”

Such is only a part of the speech which Castelnau is reported to have made to the chancellor, who hung down his head in silence, but signed the sentence of his condemnation.

Castelnau, with his fifteen gentlemen, were beheaded before the windows of the castle ; the young king, his lovely queen, and all the royal princes, beholding the horrid sight. One of the sufferers dipped his hands in the blood of his comrades, and holding them up, cried aloud, “ Lord, behold the blood of thy servants ! Thou wilt avenge it !”

The unhappy chancellor was instantly overwhelmed with remorse and fear. He had himself been suspected of joining in the conspiracy against the Guises, and fear of man had been stronger in his heart than fear of God. He hurried to his room after this dreadful scene, threw himself on his bed, and arose no more. He died within a few days. He refused to speak to the cardinal of Lorraine, whom he called “ that accursed cardinal,” declaring that he was the author of all the bloodshed. He died utterly inconsolable.

The chancellor who succeeded this perhaps really good, but temporizing man, was one whose tolerant principles might, a little earlier, have allayed the ferment that was now general in France.

L'Hôpital persuaded the duke of Guise to hold a national council at Fontainbleau, for the purpose of ascertaining and regulating the religious differences of the kingdom. The Guises, knowing that by such a convocation of the nobility for the purpose of discussion, they would more easily find out their enemies, agreed to the proposal.

So many instances of treachery and duplicity had occurred, that neither the Bourbon princes, nor, indeed, any of the party opposed to the Guises, put much faith in the declarations of the court, and looked upon the summons to attend this council with great suspicion. The king of Navarre and prince de Condé, instead of going to Fontainbleau, went into the country, and occupied themselves in raising troops. Admiral Coligny and his brother attended the council. The former brought a petition from the Protestant body, which, as was customary, he presented kneeling to the king. It contained a prayer that persecution might cease; and stated that, though called heretics, the petitioners were willing to abide by the authority of the Scriptures, but pleaded that the pope was not the person to decide on questions concerning them, as his decrees were more partial than just.

In answer to a speech from the eloquent cardinal against the Protestants, Coligny remarked, that he spoke in the name of fifty thousand people. "This," says Brantôme, "so angered the duke, that he declared he

would break the heads of his fifty thousand Protestants with a hundred thousand good Catholics."

The duke and the admiral had been friends in youth, as well as fellow-soldiers in the service of their country; it was only now that their former friendship was entirely abandoned, and enmity substituted in its place. Henceforth, these men are to confront each other in a long and fearful struggle. The king of Navarre and his brother, being princes of the blood-royal, were obstacles to the ambition of the Guises. Condé was already charged with a share in the conspiracy of Amboise, and both thought it more prudent to keep away from court. They were summoned to attend a meeting of the states-general at Orléans, and finally informed that, if absent on that occasion, they should be treated as criminals. Navarre, frightened into obedience, prepared to attend the summons, and dismissed his little band with the assurance of obtaining their pardon from the king. "Go," replied an old soldier, "and obtain your own if you can; we will find ours with our swords."

The prince de Condé was advised by all his friends not to go to Orléans, as they considered his safety very doubtful. The same advice was given to Coligny, whose brother, the cardinal Chatillon, was very anxious to deter him from doing so; but his desire to obtain an edict for Protestant liberty at that general assembly, made him resolve to risk any danger. The

advice of cardinal Bourbon, the brother of Condé, also prevailed with the prince to go to the king.

Francis received Navarre and his brother with coldness, and conducted them to his mother, who, more deceitfully, welcomed them with warmth. A few high words passed between the king and Condé, the former reproaching the prince with having made an attempt on his life. Francis left the room, and Condé was instantly arrested. As the officer took him from the door to place him in prison, his attendant asked if he should want his horse. "Alas!" said the brave young prince, "I shall never want him again!" So certain, to his own mind, was the fate that awaited him. The grief and fear of the king of Navarre were extreme. Though not arrested, he was himself closely watched; so also were Coligny and Andelot. The cardinal of Bourbon wept as his brother passed him, and reproached him for his advice.

"I saw the king of Navarre," says Brantôme, "come twice that evening to the cardinal of Lorraine, once in his chamber and once in the garden, not like a prince, but like a simple gentleman, to solicit him for his brother; speaking to him with his hat off, though it was very cold, while the cardinal was quite at his ease."

But no entreaties could avail for the unfortunate prince, who preserved his courage and gaiety while waiting the sentence of death. His

wife knelt to the king only for permission to see him, promising not to speak a word, nor even make a sign. But such supplications only irritated a weak mind and revengeful temper. A priest was sent to Condé, though his wife was not allowed to see him; but he would not temporize in religion, and declined to receive him.

As the king of Navarre could not well be brought to the scaffold, it was proposed to assassinate him, and some authors assert that Francis was to perform the deed himself, as if in a moment of passion: others say a sign was to be made by him for the entrance of the assassin, while the two royal persons were conversing. However it was, the heart of the unhappy youth is believed to have failed, and Navarre was suffered to leave his presence. The duke of Guise, seeing this, exclaimed, “What a poor cowardly boy he is!”

Condé was condemned to death. During the interval that elapsed, his cheerfulness remained the same; he was tranquil while every one was disturbed for him. A great change, however, was at hand. About a week before the day appointed for the execution of the prince, Francis was taken ill. His illness was of a singular character, such as to cause suspicions that poison had been administered, a practice which was very common at that day. The chancellor, who, under various pretences, had put off signing the warrant for Condé’s execution, now resolved to delay it longer, in hope

that the death of Francis might save the prince. To effect this object, he pretended to be ill.

The Guises, alarmed at the state of the king's health, and anxious to have Condé removed out of their way, sent to the chancellor's house to get the order signed, but the poor chancellor was seized with such a violent attack of pain that they could not effect their object.

While the wretched young king was dying, the factions of his court were busy. The Guises knew they must lose their great means of power when their niece, the young queen, lost hers; and as Catharine de' Medici would again come into power, their policy was to obtain her favour. The good chancellor, who was anxious to save Condé, had convinced Catharine that, by destroying these Bourbon princes, she would injure her own interests, and give more power to the formidable Guises; that politic woman, therefore, had in time negotiated with the king of Navarre, and induced him to resign all claim to be the regent of France during the minority of her next son, who must succeed his dying brother; and, in return, she stipulated to save his brother, the prince de Condé.

Francis II. died in the eighteenth year of his age, after a distracted reign of seventeen months. Such was his character, that it was said the only benefit he ever conferred upon the world, was to leave it so early. His decease saved Condé. The calmness with which the prince had heard his condemnation to death, was

scarcely shaken by the tidings of his reprieve. An attendant came to the prison to inform him of the king's decease, but was afraid to do so in the hearing of his jailer ; he contrived, by stooping under the table, to cause the prince to stoop also, and then whispered, " Our man is dead ! "

Together with other deeds, of which, perhaps, she was guiltless, Catharine de' Medici has been accused of causing the surgeon to put poison into an abscess in the ear of her son Francis ; the king's death being the only means of affording her the power for which she thirsted.

We shall now keep closer to the history of Protestantism, with which all these events are intimately connected.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES IX. 1560—1574.

PART I.

THE church of Notre Dame de Cléry, not far from Orléans, where Francis II. died, is famous as being the scene of the extraordinary devotions of that singularly cruel tyrant, Louis XI. There he used to supplicate the virgin Mary, whom, in the hope of preserving the life he lived in dread of losing, he had created colonel of his guards. To that same church did one of his successors on the throne of France, despatch a band of pilgrims in his last sickness, to make a vow at the altar of "Our Lady of Cléry," that, if he were allowed to recover, he would utterly exterminate heretics from his kingdom. This vow was made by Francis II. shortly before his death. That event, however, materially changed the aspect of Protestant affairs.

His next brother, Charles, ascended the throne at ten years of age. His mother, Catharine, was appointed regent, and thus attained her aim, the possession of supreme authority.

Her indefatigable and crafty policy was

directed towards the maintenance of an equal balance of power among the opposing factions, or parties, so that her own might be superior to all. By lowering the Guises, and bringing forward the king of Navarre and the prince de Condé, she meant to equalize the political influence of the two great parties in the kingdom. Both of these tried to win the stern old Montmorency ; but at first he would not join his great enemies, the Guises ; and he detested the Protestants to the last. He came to court when summoned by the queen, knelt to kiss his little sovereign's hand, shed tears upon it, and promised to sacrifice his life, if necessary, in his king's defence.

The Protestant interests were now greatly favoured. The chancellor, L'Hôpital, indulged the hope of introducing religious toleration in France ; and thus extinguishing the feud that for so many years had destroyed peace, life, and property, and greatly injured the cause of piety. The Guises, though stripped of much of their authority, were still looked up to as the heads of the Roman Catholic party, and the defenders of the church. The policy of Catharine led her to patronize their opponents. Protestantism was not only tolerated for the time being, but became fashionable. Reserve was thrown off ; the real sentiments of numbers became apparent ; others, to whom all religion was alike indifferent, fell in with the fashion of the court, which now appeared to be almost wholly Protestant. Calvinistic ministers were

admitted even to preach in the palace. The churches were nearly empty, and the Protestant assemblies crowded. Meat was publicly sold during Lent, and served at the tables of those who had never yet decidedly professed the reformed religion. The superstitions of the Roman church formed a common subject of discourse. But a more important matter was, that an edict was issued, forbidding any persons to be disturbed in their religion. A Jesuit deplores the fact, that “heresy was now seen triumphantly to enter the palace of the most Christian king, and to exercise there a complete sway.” We shall see, hereafter, that there was *one* “good Catholic,” at least, in that palace, a child of seven years old, Catharine’s daughter, Margaret.

Our old Bunyan has said, that it is a dangerous time when religion walks in her silver slippers. In the spiritual history of Christ’s church this is generally true. But Protestantism in France was seldom exposed to this danger, and its sudden elevation might predict as great a depression. This favourable aspect of things soon changed; how could it be otherwise, when the countenance that smiled on the Protestant cause was that of Catharine de’ Medici?

The line of policy she pursued disgusted the harsh and superstitious, yet more conscientious Montmorency; and the state of the finances having induced the king of Navarre to propose recalling the extravagant grants made in the

last two reigns, the duke of Guise, Montmorency, and marshal St. André, fearing to have to refund the vast sums they had received, formed a league to protect themselves, and resist the Protestant party. To this object the long-subsisting enmity of Guise and Montmorency yielded ; and, repairing together to church, accompanied by marshal St. André, they solemnly swore at the altar to renounce all private jealousies, and unite for the purpose of defending religion and exterminating the heretics.

To excite the wrath of a fanatic multitude, it was reported that the queen regent was a Protestant, and that it was on account of her own heresy she interfered to save some who had been condemned to die. Two powerful parties now opposed each other. Guise, Montmorency, and St. André, who were called the triumvirs, were at the head of the Roman Catholic; the king of Navarre and prince de Condé, at that of the Protestant.

The queen's policy, or art, was directed to moderate the authority of each. Of no religion herself, her only desire was to control both. For this cause, she conciliated the Protestants, lest they should attach themselves too closely to the king of Navarre, as their only support, and render him formidable to her, as aspiring to the regency; and for this cause, too, she conciliated the duke of Guise, lest, if the Protestants grew too powerful for her, she should require his support.

By a decree of the parliament of 1561, the Protestants were expressly forbidden to assemble for public worship; but, by the same decree, all violent proceedings against them were suspended until a general council should have been held. When their petition for the liberty of holding public worship was refused, the duke of Guise expressed the greatest satisfaction, and declared that to maintain that law, he would not let his sword ever stick to the scabbard.

A temporary peace was, however, granted, and the lives of men were spared if they prayed in their own language, or worshipped God according to their own belief. The public voice, indeed, though not with the people who were called Protestant, was generally raised in a protest against the abuses of the established church. The representatives of the country, in an assembly of the states-general, loudly decried the ignorance and dissolute habits of the religious orders, and urged the public wish, that the great wealth of ecclesiastics should be better divided, and a part of it appropriated to paying off the debts of the crown.

The necessity of reform was felt, and a general council was proposed and unanimously demanded, for the purpose of considering the question. The Council of Trent, originally convened for the same object, was then holding its sittings. The pope most strenuously opposed the desire of the people of France. The name of council was, therefore, resigned; but notwithstanding the opposition of the papacy, a general

conference was appointed, at which the chief points of difference between the Roman Catholic and the reformed churches were to be discussed. The bishops and dignitaries of the former, and the principal divines and ministers of the latter, were invited to attend this conference, to be held at Poissy.

The cardinal of Lorraine was much blamed by his church for permitting this conference. He should, indeed, have known that Rome prohibits discussion. The general of the Jesuits was sent by the pope to try to stop it. He declared there was “nothing more dangerous than to discuss with heretics, who, in Scripture, are compared to wolves in sheep’s clothing, and to foxes, because, under an ambiguous expression, they insinuate the venom of their heresy.”

The cardinal, however, who had conveyed his unfortunate niece to her kingdom of Scotland, and left her to struggle there, more unsuccessfully, with the same religion he wished to crush in France, had shown a willingness to admit of a conference in which he, probably, believed his great talents and eloquence would obtain him a triumph over the scanty band of twelve reformed ministers, who were to appear there in opposition to five cardinals, forty bishops, and a great body of doctors of theology.

Calvin was invited to attend this discussion, as the usually-acknowledged leader of the French Protestants; but that reformer was

then safely settled at Geneva, after many dangers and escapes in his native country: he had probably no desire to tempt again “the wrath of the lion,” and deputed Theodore Beza, also a French Protestant, and who afterwards wrote the Church History of his times, to supply his place at Poissy.

Beza says, that when he arrived at St. Germain, where the court was, he preached in the hall of the prince de Condé, “to a very great and notable assembly;” that no tumult nor scandal occurred; and, after nightfall, he was called to the apartments of the king of Navarre, where he met the queen and other great persons—among them, the cardinal of Lorraine. The latter addressed him in the presence of the company, and implored him to render back to the service of his country and religion the great gifts with which God had endowed him; so that, as his schism had done much injury, his return to the church might tend to restore peace. Beza’s polite reply was, that the cardinal attributed too much influence to one so insignificant as he was.

The conference of Poissy was held on the 9th of September, 1561. The place of meeting was the large eating-room of a monastery, wherein were assembled all the chief persons of the church or state. The young king and the queen regent, the princes of the blood royal, and all their courts; the bishops and cardinals, in their splendid dresses. These must have formed a strong contrast to the

simplicity of the Calvinist ministers, attired only in black gowns and bands.

The chancellor, whose aim was toleration and uniformity, opened the meeting in a speech, wherein he hinted a desire that the Catholic clergy would moderate some points of doctrine, or observance, so as to allow their opponents to approach them more nearly.

Beza was then called on to address the assembly. He advanced into the centre of the room, and instantly knelt down, the other Protestant ministers doing the same; then prayed aloud and fervently to God. The effect produced was powerful, the more so as no one was prepared for such a proceeding. The beauty of his language, the softness of his manner, and deep earnestness of his voice, impressed all who heard him.

The account of his speech which follows is from the pen of Catharine de' Medici. "He began in gentle and moderate words, saying, that if it could be proved from Scripture that he was in error, he was ready to yield to the truth; but, falling at length on the doctrine of the holy sacrament, he forgot himself, so as to speak in a manner so absurd, and so offensive to all present, that I was on the point of commanding him to be silent; but, thinking they might turn this interruption to their own advantage, I allowed him to proceed."

The offensive words were on the subject of transubstantiation. Up to that point, Beza had defended the reformers' doctrine without assail-

ing those they protested against; but then he gave utterance to the opinion, that though the very body and blood of Christ were in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, received spiritually by faith, yet that he believed the actual body of Christ to be as far from the real bread and wine as heaven was from earth.

Cardinal Tournon would fain have stopped the speaker; but though some angry expressions escaped, Beza was allowed to end his speech. The cardinal of Lorraine then murmured the words, "Would to God that man had been dumb, or that we had all been deaf!" He was Beza's chief opponent, and took two articles of his faith as his subject—the authority of the church, and the doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament. He made a long and brilliant harangue. As soon as he uttered the last words, the other cardinals and bishops gathered round the little king, eagerly saying to him, "There, that is the Catholic faith; that is the pure doctrine of the church; we are ready to die for it if required."

The boy-king was only allowed to retain the impression of the cardinal's brilliant speech. Beza wished to reply, but was not permitted; and Charles was not suffered to attend any other discussions of the conference.

Indeed, these discussions, as is frequently the case, produced no great result; certainly they did nothing to bring about reform in the church, though some of the bishops are believed to have received some light and know-

ledge from Beza. The great point of disputation was transubstantiation, and the discussion may be said to have closed by each party retaining his own opinion, and each side claiming the victory.

The king of Navarre, some time afterwards, affirmed, as an excuse for his conduct, that it was at this conference he first discovered that there was any difference in the religious opinions of Protestants. The cause of this difference appearing was, that some German divines were present who held Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation. The cardinal took advantage of the opportunity to ask Beza if he, like Martin Luther, held the doctrine of consubstantiation. To which Beza replied, "And do you, like Martin Luther, reject that of transubstantiation?" On this occasion, the learning and elegance of Beza did much to remove the bitter prejudice against the followers of Calvin, which a harsher manner would have increased.

The pope, fearing that another of the chief kingdoms of Europe was about to throw off its allegiance, despatched instructions to his agent at Paris to neglect no means of strengthening the Catholic interest in France. The vacillating king of Navarre became the prize which that party aimed at obtaining. He was offered the kingdom of Sardinia as a compensation for the inferior one of Navarre, which the king of Spain had seized. He declined the offer, perhaps not at first putting faith in its sincerity. The Guises then, in conjunction with the pope's

legate, proposed to him to procure a divorce from his wife, the Protestant queen of Navarre, and to give him, instead, the hand of the fair Mary of Scots, with her kingdom. He rejected this proposal also. He had a son, a fine and engaging boy, on whom his hopes were fixed. It is most probable that, for the sake of this son, afterwards the famous Henry IV., he refused to divorce his wife; but he soon yielded in other respects to the temptations presented to him; and, deserting Protestantism and the Protestants, was gladly received by their adversaries.

An attempt to win his uncompromising wife to a like change was unavailing; the queen replied that, "If she had her kingdom in one hand, and her son in the other, she would cast both into the sea rather than go to mass."

The mansion of the queen of Navarre had been open to the oppressed Protestants, and there they had been allowed to assemble to receive the exhortations of their ministers, and derive, from their prayers, consolation under suffering. But, by the defection of the king, this great benefit was lost to them. To Protestants of rank the advantage derived from "the preaching," as their worship was called, in the palace of the king of Navarre, was, perhaps, greater, and the loss more deeply felt, than it would have been by those of a lower condition, to whom, under the circumstances of the times, religious instruction and consolation were more accessible. By these, the

event was deplored, when, in consequence of her husband's turning to the church of Rome, Jeanne was prohibited from holding Protestant assemblies at her house.

The consternation of Catharine was extreme when she found out the intentions of Navarre. She saw that, if his influence were joined to that of the Guises, her own supremacy would be in danger. Her last hope was admiral Coligny, who, having disliked her politics and distrusted her sincerity, had kept aloof from her, though he had watched the proceedings of Navarre and the Guises, and was aware of the treaty they had set on foot with the king of Spain, who, having his own designs on France, was ready, independently of Roman Catholic zeal, to foment its divisions and forward their views.

In order to win the support of Coligny, Catharine undertook to befriend the Protestants; and the desertion of the king of Navarre was thus the means of affording them more protection, although they did not obtain the religious liberty which it was Coligny's great object to procure. Still, Protestantism in France appeared in a more favourable, or, rather, a less oppressed condition.

The state of France, generally, must have been most injurious to the spirit of pure religion; and the example given by the great, who, as their interests dictated, oppressed or protected the Protestants, must have produced evil results on the lower classes of a people but partially enlightened, and naturally excitable. While en-

joying some degree of royal favour, the Protestants were guilty of a gross outrage, in breaking into a church, demolishing statues, and even shedding blood in the tumult. The reason stated by historians is, that the bell for vespers disturbed them while listening to a preacher; and that the messengers they sent to request it might cease were ill-treated. But is this an excuse? Their conduct, even if not the first aggressors, was unjustifiable; they had no right to make such a request, and their duty, in any case, was to remember our blessed Lord's command—“When they smite you on one cheek turn to them the other also.” But, as the Roman Catholic was the established religion of the land, they had no right to request that the bell for its services should cease to sound.

The origin of the term Huguenot has never been found out. It was about this time it began to be commonly given to the French Protestants. Some French author says, that it was invented first at Tours, and arose from a local custom of terrifying children with the bugbear of a certain king Hugo; and thus Protestants, as objects of fear and horror, came to receive an appellation from this frightful and imaginary personage. Perhaps such a derivation of the title is quite as likely as a more learned one. We all know what absurd names have been given to religious sects in England.

The old chancellor, L'Hôpital, was a liberal in principle. He argued as a liberal would now do. He wished to put an end to tumult

and violence by granting laws which each party must abide by, and to introduce a system of mutual toleration. The Guises opposed this plan, but the chancellor persevered. His arguments were these: Does the interest of the state require, or forbid, that the Calvinists should be allowed to meet for public worship? Supposing the Protestant religion to be in itself bad, is that a reason to the state for forbidding it? Is it not possible to be a good subject without being either a good Catholic or a good Christian?

Such were the liberal arguments of the chancellor. And the law, passed in consequence, chiefly, of these arguments, while it shows us that the Protestants had already been guilty of the violence which has still left its memorials in France, shows us also, most plainly, how moderate their demands still were, and how small a degree of toleration was that for which they unavailingly petitioned.

The prohibitions of this edict we shall mention first. Protestant ministers were not allowed to itinerate from town to town, but must abide with one congregation. They must not attack the doctrines and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church, and their opponents, in return, must no longer inveigh against their religion; "such a practice having hitherto served rather to excite to sedition than to persuade to devotion." No assembly of Protestant ministers, or synod, was to be held without permission of the state and the presence of a magistrate.

No resistance was to be made to the payment of church revenues.

The privileges granted were, a suspension of all penal laws or violent proceedings against them on account of religion, and the great privilege of having places of worship *outside* the towns, where they were allowed to meet unarmed. The article alluded to, as bearing witness to the unlawful violence of the too zealous Protestants, is that which ordains the restoration of all churches on which they had seized, together with the crucifixes, statues, and other adornments, of which they had stripped them.

This law was thought to have granted too much to Protestantism. The high Roman Catholic party heard it in discontented silence. Its terms, however, such as they were, were never fully carried out, and were soon infringed in a most daring manner, and that by the attendants of the duke of Guise, the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, who beheld, if he did not sanction, the massacre of the Protestant worshippers of Vassy.

We must briefly state some political events that intervened.

The sanction of the Protestants by the queen regent caused the triumvirs, or three Roman Catholic leaders, to seek more anxiously the alliance of the bigoted king of Spain and of the pope. They then required Catharine to discard Coligny and his brothers. She pleaded the power of the Protestants, which rendered the service of

these leaders necessary to her to support the state, as otherwise she might be exposed to their enmity. The Spanish ambassador, taking her in her own craftiness, offered the troops of his master to subdue these enemies. This was not what she then desired. If the Protestants fell, the Guises would rise; and, besides, in the case of the king of Spain, she would probably apply the old fable, and know that the fox might, as umpire, eat up the whole portion, while the lawful owners were disputing about the size of their shares.

The triumvirs, however, depended on the assistance of Spain, and, no longer reckoning on Catharine, resolved to seize on the young king, and take him out of his mother's power.

Admiral Coligny now saw that the only hope of Protestantism lay in decision. He called on all persons of rank who had not yet made an open confession of their faith, to come forward and do so. No longer adopting the wavering policy of Navarre, or the temporizing policy of Catharine, he demanded that they should for once and forever declare whose they were, and whom they would serve.

The prince de Condé was among those who responded to the call, and made a public acknowledgment of the Protestant religion. Many men of rank, without actually separating from the Roman church, separated from many of its errors, and others threw off many of its restraints. The cardinal of Chatillon, Coligny's brother, and also the bishop of Nevers, were

openly married. Monks and nuns left their convents ; and, from the number of persons who assembled in the suburbs of Paris alone, for the observance of the Calvinistic worship, we might conclude that the capital must be almost wholly Protestant.

We do not wonder that the indignation of Rome was excited. Anathemas and menaces were pronounced from the pulpits. Alas ! that any sound but that of the gospel of Christ should issue from thence ! But the result was, as it ever had been, and still is, that, whenever occasion offered, the denounced people were assaulted, or murdered, by their ignorant fellow-creatures, who were taught to believe that whoever killed them did God service.

A rising of the Protestants was apprehended, and, at a moment when the people of Paris entertained a serious and natural fear, from seeing the queen regent more closely connected with them, the duke of Guise, the defender of the Roman Catholic church, was absent in the country, and was called to their assistance.

Guise obeyed the call, and was on his road to Paris when the event occurred which has been before alluded to, and to which, in the fearful and bloody annals of the times that followed, additional celebrity has been given, as to it is imputed the outbreak of the civil and religious war that so long desolated France. It is certain that that war must have taken place under the circumstances of the times, and the exasperated feelings that existed. In all

such circumstances, an accident only is required to produce the explosion for which the train is laid. The question at issue had become political as well as religious.

A small town in the ancient province of Champagne, named Vassy, has gained a name on the page of French history as that which first stamped disgrace on the name of Guise, by the cruel outrage perpetrated by his followers, though, with his dying breath, he declared he never instigated it.

The duke, attended by a numerous suite, reached Vassy, on his way to Paris, on a Sunday morning, and at the hour when the Protestants were assembled for worship. It might be remembered, to his prejudice, that, in order to prevent them from this liberty, he had declared that his sword should never stick to its scabbard. But whatever impatient or angry expressions he might have used, it is not likely that such a man as he was, ever authorized a base assault on an unarmed and defenceless people. Guise himself went to hear mass ; his people went to the Protestant meeting ; and, having provoked by insult some semblance of an excuse, rushed into the chapel with drawn swords, and fell on the unfortunate people, who, in obedience to the laws, were without arms.

The report of the affray was brought to the church where the duke was at prayers. He rushed from it—we cannot believe the statement to be untrue—and hurried to the scene, where, doubtless, one word of his would have arrested

the violence of the people ; but a stone, flung by one who had no other weapon to use, struck him on the cheek, and the sight of his blood redoubled the fury he might otherwise have allayed. Though a command for the massacre of Vassy would appear incompatible with the character of a humane and gallant soldier, it is, on the other hand, a proof of lukewarmness, to say the least, in his wish to arrest that massacre, that he should retire to have a wound dressed which, to a soldier, must have been nothing, leaving so many defenceless persons, men, women, and children, to be murdered. His own party affirmed that no life would have been lost if blood so precious to the nation had not been seen to flow. Perhaps not. But a few drops of the blood of Guise were dearly paid for by more than eighty lives.

The duke of Guise, whose generous and humane conduct gained him in foreign war as much renown as his valour, was henceforth named by the disgraceful title of “The Butcher of Vassy.” Such are the lamentable results of civil and religious animosity !

When Beza and Coligny hoped to find the king of Navarre so shocked at this foul business, that, in disgust at the spirit which produced it, he would turn back to the way he had left, they found that he had, on the contrary, received a version of it which displeased him still more with the Protestants. He said he understood that they had made a bad use of the edict lately granted in their favour, and

wished to murder the duke of Guise. How seldom does report speak truly !

Beza replied, that he spoke of a religion which teaches how to endure injuries better than it does to repel them—"But," he added, "remember, sire, it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers." Such, truly, has been the case ! The religion of Christ has worn out many a persecutor's blows !

Unfortunately, the massacre of Vassy gave rise to still more frightful massacres in other parts of the country. At Sens so many Protestants were killed that three days were spent in slaughter; their dead bodies floated on the Seine to Paris; and it is said that the young king, walking near that river, observed one of these corpses, and asked what it was. The Protestant attendant answered that it was only some of his majesty's subjects coming to demand justice.

At Amiens, Toulouse, and Cahors, the greatest barbarities were committed. At Sens, the cathedral bell for three days continued to toll, as if summoning the people to a righteous work. At Toulouse, three hundred miserable Protestants were shut up for three days without meat or drink, and then led out, tied in couples, to a common slaughter-house, and killed. It is right, however painful, to mention such facts, in order to show cause, not only for the civil war that was now drawing on, but to account, in some degree, for the ferocity of retaliation that so sadly characterised it,

CHAPTER VII.

CHARLES IX.

PART II.

THE prince de Condé, and all the Protestants of rank, with the exception of admiral Coligny, were desirous at once to take arms in the cause of their religion and their suffering people. Coligny is said only to have yielded to the representations of his wife on their behalf.

Paris presented a singular scene. The duke of Guise, after the journey just recorded, entered the capital with the air of a conqueror and a sovereign; escorted by Montmorency and two thousand gentlemen, with a strong party of cavalry. He was hailed as the defender of the church, and the deliverer of the people. Condé vainly attempted to attract a portion of popularity. The trains of the rival princes often met in the streets, and it was to the natural generosity of the duke that the latter owed his safety, as his orders, or interference, prevented the collisions which must otherwise have occurred between the numerous followers of Guise and the scanty band of the prince.

Catharine, terrified at these demonstrations

on the part of the ambitious Guise, wrote pressing letters to Condé and Coligny for help against him. The prince made use of these letters from the sovereign to stimulate the Protestants ; they were aroused from all parts and from every class, and prepared to defend the queen and resist their own enemies.

The duke was too good a general to lose time in operations. With far greater despatch than the poor conspirators of Amboise had used, he and his colleagues set out with a party of horse for the palace of Fontainebleau, and, arriving there before they were expected, informed the queen that they had come to carry the king away with them ; but that she was at liberty either to come with them, or to go where she pleased.

In vain the foiled and disappointed Catharine tried every artifice to delay the time, in hope of succour arriving from Condé. An artful mind is almost always cowardly. Catharine feared, by resigning her son, to lose her own authority in the state, and, by accompanying him, to endanger her own life or liberty. Montmorency decided the case by ordering his party to horse, and the poor little king and his unhappy mother were conveyed to the fortress of Meulan, and, finally, for greater security, brought to Paris. Had the conspirators of Amboise been equally prompt, and, by one bold step, as successful, the fate of Protestantism in France would possibly have been different ; and then different, too, might have been the history of that fine country—a

history which, for glory and for guilt, must be pre-eminent in that of nations. Those conspirators were unsuccessful, and suffered the doom of traitors. The achievement of Guise, though its object was the same, has been differently regarded. The former, however, designed to take young Francis II. from the hands of the Roman Catholics; the latter took young Charles IX. from the hands of the Protestants. The prince de Condé, and Coligny, who, when he saw open war had become inevitable, took the most prudent measures for carrying it on, brought a party of a thousand horse, to secure the queen and her royal son; but the promptitude of Guise had already gained the prize.

The condition of the Protestants of Paris was now deplorable; they were everywhere insulted and injured. The superstitious Montmorency did not consider it beneath his dignity to lead his soldiers to the suburbs of the city, where Protestant worship had been legally permitted, to force open the doors of places of worship, break the pulpits and benches; then, leaving these houses of prayer in flames behind him, re-enter Paris, and be cheered by the mob, who, says the witty Brantôme, gave the general the title of captain Burn-Bench.

After a sanguinary conflict, Condé and Andelot got possession of Orléans. Civil war burst forth throughout France. Many of the principal towns were gained by the Huguenots, as the French Protestants were now universally named. Nismes, Montauban, Lyons, Bourges,

Valence, and Rouen, were all among the most important places of France. Orléans commanded the river Loire, and Rouen the Seine, two great channels of communication with Paris; and these were all possessed by them.

It is not intended to enter at large on the details of a war which bigotry and intolerance kindled. The horrors of a religious war are said to exceed those of all other wars; and in the tumult of evil passions, excited in civil contest, where personal, not national, enmities are indulged, who would think of looking for the spirit of Christianity, the spirit Christ breathed upon his disciples when he sent them out as lambs in the midst of wolves, to be attacked, but not to attack; to be slain, but not to slay? Admiral Coligny knew and felt the too probable influence of such a war on the troops engaged in it; and when some one praised their good order, he quietly answered, "It is a good thing while it lasts."

The Protestant army was naturally composed, in great part, of raw, undisciplined volunteers, such a multitude as rush to arms in the outbreak of a civil war, believing that a single conflict will secure to them the object for which they contend, and utterly unprepared for the patient, persevering struggle by which it is usually attained. Coligny's first object was to organize these troops, and to take measures for the maintenance of decency and decorum among them. All immorality and profaneness were strictly forbidden, and ministers

were appointed to each division of the army, for the performance of religious duties. The demoralizing and unchristianizing influence of war had not been felt when the following account was given of the Huguenot army:— “When this war first began, the chief captains in the Huguenot army still recollect the fine military order that prevailed in the wars of Francis I. and Henry, his son; with which remembrance the soldiers had the continual exhortations of their ministers, who admonished them not to use their arms for the oppression of the poor people. The zeal of religion was then strong in them, more especially in the nobility, so that, without constraint, each man held himself in subjection. If a crime were committed, the guilty were banished, or given over to justice; their companions would not intercede for them, so great was their detestation of wickedness and love of virtue. . . . Throughout this great multitude the name of God was never blasphemed; neither dice nor cards were in the camp; evening and morning, when the guards were changed, public prayers were made, and psalms were sung throughout the camp; a piety unusual to men accustomed to war.” We must hope that in many individuals the grace of God kept alive devotion in their hearts; but, in the mass, the Huguenot army did not continue undefiled by the corruption of war, and the rage of the worst of human passions.

Supplies neither of men nor of money were

sufficiently furnished to Coligny, to enable him or the prince to contend, with any hope of success, against a leader so formidable as Guise, who, making the young king do as he directed, appeared to the people to have the sanction of royal authority. To obtain money, without which no army can long be kept together, the ministers of the churches—of which, notwithstanding all the restrictions on public worship, there were at this time throughout France more than two thousand—levied contributions from their congregations. This, however, went but a little way, even with the exhortations of Beza, who had fled from Paris to Orléans, and attached himself to the prince. The Protestant leaders were thus led to pursue means far less creditable. The public treasures of all the places they got possession of were appropriated to their use ; but, besides this, the spoils of the national churches yielded them the supply they needed. With one exception, shortly to be noticed, these proceedings gained the Huguenots greater opprobrium than any other. The rich abbeys were plundered, and those treasures which the Roman Catholics regarded with devotion—silver crucifixes, images, richly-adorned shrines, all the treasures which a sacristy in former times possessed in gold and jewels—were turned into money for the use of the Protestants, and that, in general, with a degree of violence which deepened the offence. The finest churches were defaced, many of them were used as

stables, and the lead of the roofs was melted down for bullets. Exactly similar scenes were witnessed in the French revolution of 1789, but did not produce the same exasperated feeling in the population, though carried to a much greater extent, and attended by those disgusting circumstances of violating the tombs, and insulting, with idle mockery, the long-buried dead, which cannot be read of without horror. And yet the traveller who examines the monuments still remaining in France, of each of these devastations, must be struck by the fact, that the French, who show an averseness to allude to the latter, or will only briefly name them, as a misfortune incident to the time, will dwell upon the former with the long-perpetuated memory of ancient animosity. But, though neither Protestant zeal, nor needy rapacity, can excuse the Huguenot ravages, yet, compared with those which infidelity committed, they sink into nothing. Indeed, without even referring to them for a comparison, monarchs, who have been accounted by their church "good Christians," have not scrupled to make use of church treasures, as the shrine of St. Martin can witness, whose silver railing, presented by the curious devotion of the cruel Louis XI., was melted into current coin by Francis I.

Another obnoxious proceeding on the part of the Huguenot chiefs, was, inviting the English into France. The prince de Condé was commander-in-chief; Coligny was second in command, though first both in counsel and action.

Andelot was sent to Germany, to solicit succour from the Protestant princes, which he obtained. They then turned their hopes to England, where the Protestant queen Elizabeth, the foe to Spain and popery, would be likely to assist them. But Elizabeth, notwithstanding her Protestantism, would not give her help for nothing. Calais, the last remnant of England's great possessions in France, had been retaken by its lawful proprietors in her sister's reign. She stipulated for its return; and as a guarantee, obtained the right to garrison with her soldiers, the three principal keys to the French kingdom, on the side of England, Havre-de-Grâce, Rouen, and Dieppe. "Behold the fruits of the new religion!" cried a French author, indignant at this betrayal of a nation's interests: and for this act Condé obtained more disgrace and reproach than for any other. Even the history of England would prove that such a step might render his allies the conquerors of his country. To surrender such important towns to the possession of an enemy so formidable to France as England had ever been, was to excite, with justice, the popular indignation.

Condé and Coligny prepared for an attack on Paris, resolving to attempt to gain possession of the king's person. But while the Huguenot army marched from Orléans to Paris, the Roman Catholic army had set out from Paris to attack Orléans. A battle between the armies, which thus undesignedly encountered each other, was on the point of taking place, when

Catharine, anxious to prevent it, desired a conference with Condé, in hopes to negotiate.

An incident consequent to civil war, and very congenial to French temperaments, took place while the parties were conferring. Their escorts, posted at a stated distance, to prevent the danger of a conflict, had remained looking at each other. Brother was opposed to brother, in the persons of their chiefs, the king of Navarre and prince de Condé; many old friends and relatives were drawn up in these hostile ranks. The royal party wore crimson scarfs, and used crimson banners; the Huguenot army was distinguished by white. As they regarded each other, the feelings of nature prevailed, and instead of drawing their swords, as their commanders had feared, they rushed forward and embraced each other. Who can forbear to wish that such feelings had prevailed? that, agreeing to love as brethren, to be pitiful and merciful, they had suffered every man to use the freedom of mind with which God had endowed him, or employed only the weapons of Christian love, of reason, and knowledge, to lead them into the religious convictions into which no human mind can ever be forced!

In these conferences, Condé asked the queen whether, if the Protestants laid down their arms, they would be allowed the free exercise of their religion. To which Catharine, doubtless by previous agreement, replied, that "There could be no peace in France so long as any religion but that of Rome, which alone was suited to

its constitution, should be sought to be established ; that the edict of January had been the source of these troubles, and must be abolished ; and the Huguenots must satisfy themselves in the internal and private duties of their religion." Coligny answered that they had, therefore, to choose between death and exile.

A scene follows, from which the Protestant historian would willingly turn his eyes ; but a partial historian is guilty of great error, and implants doubt, in wishing to strengthen belief. A Protestant traveller in France may open a guide-book, and be startled by the mention of Huguenot *prédateurs*, or by the notice of places unhappily signalized by "the ferocious baron des Adrets, and his Huguenot followers," and, having seen all this qualified or passed over by a Protestant writer, the cause of truth will suffer an injury ; and because errors have been concealed, the virtues that have been recorded may be deemed exaggerated or untrue. The very name of religion, which has at first given a sanction to arms, is but seldom invoked in the use made of them. "The Huguenots took and plundered the town of Beaugency, behaving there," says a historian of the time, "as if a reward were offered to him who did the worst." Such, indeed, appeared now to be the contest on both sides, who should be the most cruel, most violent, and most unchristian. Such is war, and, above all, civil war. Such a rivalry may be said to have existed on the part of a Protestant and a

Roman Catholic general. Des Adrets on the former, and Montluc on the latter side, were rivals in barbarity. But des Adrets was the singular instance of such a commander among the Protestants, and he cannot fairly be denominated one of that party himself.

The barbarities of Montluc it can give no pleasure to enumerate ; indeed, time would fail to do so. The trees around some towns were heavy with the bodies hung upon them at his command. His own words, in the narrative written by himself of his personal memoirs, thus briefly describe his entrance into Toulouse, when it was taken from the Huguenots :—“ We immediately began to do justice, and I never saw so many heads fly off their shoulders at once, as on that day.” When that town, always famous for “ heresy,” was taken by the Roman Catholic army, the chief civil authorities proclaimed in the public places a command for all “ good Catholics ” and subjects to take arms against those of “ the religion,” and seize them, or slay them, without reserve or mercy. The massacre that ensued it is useless to dwell on. We shall only relate one instance of the barbarity of the ferocious des Adrets, and that on account of the anecdote which has given it celebrity, and caused it to be mentioned in most descriptions of France. He took prisoners the Roman Catholic garrison of Montbrison, and, by one of those iniquities of barbarism of which Montluc also was guilty, he amused himself by making these men be their own executioners, by leaping from the

tower of the cathedral. One of these soldiers having twice advanced to the edge of the height, twice stopped, and was going to run forward again. "How!" cried the brutal commander, "do you take twice to try the leap?" "Sir," said the soldier, readily, "I will give you ten times to do it." It was, perhaps, owing to a national love of wit and repartee, that des Adrets' pardon may be ascribed; for the soldier's wit saved his life.

It is consolatory to know, for the sake even of nominal Protestantism, that des Adrets forsook that church which glories in not being a persecuting one. "He returned sincerely to God and his king," says a priest of the church of Rome, in whose communion baron des Adrets died. In his old age his appearance is thus described:—"He was strong and robust, had a ferocious look, a face lean and bony, marked with spots of black blood; a sharp nose, and an aspect such as Sulla is represented with." "He brought up his sons," says Brantome, "to bathe in blood, and taught them to resemble himself." It was in Protestant blood they bathed. The son of the baron who had sought relief from a troubled conscience in the opiates which the church of Rome can afford, showed great zeal against the people for whom his father had fought, and died from remorse for killing so many Protestants on St. Bartholomew's day.

The duke of Guise besieged Rouen, where was an English as well as a Huguenot garrison. That count Montgomery, who killed Henry II.

commanded the place for the Protestants. After an obstinate resistance, it was taken by storm. The king's death was not universally believed to have been accidental, and Montgomery, who might have added to a contrary suspicion, by a junction with the Protestants, "had sworn to make his grave in the town sooner than surrender." He managed to leap into a boat, however, in which galley-slaves were employed, and escaped.

One of the orders issued by Guise on the taking of Rouen, was, to show no mercy to the English. On this occasion, one of the aged Calvinist ministers, who had attended Beza to the conference at Poissy, Marolatus, was hung in front of the cathedral. The Huguenots took the miserable vengeance of offering life for life, and hanged two presidents of the parliament.

At the siege of Rouen, Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, met his death. On the whole, his memory would have been differently regarded, had he fallen on the side of Protestantism. In his last hours, these principles appear to have gained the ascendancy. In the hour of suffering, and at the approach of death, he might call to mind the truths he had so impatiently heard from his pious wife. He had sent her from him; but it is wonderful what power the advance of death is seen to have in recalling those principles or affections, which may have been abandoned amid the temptations of life. Navarre had a Protestant minister to attend him, although a priest was brought by his

physician to administer the last sacraments of the Roman Catholic church. The celebrated Voltaire said that this monarch, "father of the firmest and most intrepid of men (Henry IV.) was the weakest and most undecided. He was so wavering in his religion, that it was never known in which he died. He bore arms against the Protestants whom he loved, fought for Catharine de' Medici who hated him, and for the Guises who oppressed him."

Brantome draws a rather ridiculous picture of his dying bed, attended by a Catholic and a Huguenot doctor, and listening to the minister of religion which either doctor recommended. But he asserts that this king died regretting his change of religion, and resolving, *if he recovered*, to help the Protestants, and that he sent such a message to his brother, the prince de Condé. How much do those words, 'If he recovered,' enforce that admonition of Scripture, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest!" Decision of character is preached throughout the Bible.

The death of the king of Navarre was not felt as a loss by the Roman Catholic party; it would have been lamented by the Protestant. His influence had ceased to be necessary to the former, and, though they had contended for him, they scarcely missed him. That party, under the victorious Guise, was now triumphant. Condé was becoming already embarrassed. Many of the great

towns which the Huguenots had possessed, were retaken; the fame of the duke rapidly advancing, and his aspirations to the throne of France being little doubted, Catharine began to think of tampering once more with the Protestants, as her only counterpoise to the power of the Guises, now that the king of Navarre was gone.

During an interval unavailingly employed in negotiation, since toleration, for which Protestants fought, would not be granted, the following scenes occurred, which are related by an eye-witness:—" You might see on either side parties conversing on the field, saluting and embracing each other, so that the German soldiers in the service of the prince de Condé, who did not understand our manners, began to murmur, thinking we were making friends with our enemies, and meant to betray them. But afterwards, when the truce was broken, seeing that the persons so ready to embrace, were equally ready to fight, they said, What fools these people are, who love each other to-day, and will kill each other to-morrow!" This was a scene in civil war; but even in a foreign one, the French soldiers in Spain, during the late war, would shake hands with their English enemies over the stream out of which they both drank. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" sin, and human passion, have broken the unity.

We will only detail the first open battle, and the most interesting of this war. Beza was

with the prince de Condé, and relates some curious particulars connected with it. "The purposes of God," he says, "were not to exterminate either army, but to punish one by means of the other; and therefore the great captains on both sides appear to have been deprived of common understanding. As to the prince, he did nothing which he ought to have done, whether his design had been to offer or to refuse a battle. And as for the Catholic leaders, they seem to have lost their senses to offer battle where they did. If they had allowed the prince to have gone on a little further, they might have destroyed his whole force with a third of their number."

Beza also relates some incidents to which, possibly, subsequent events gave importance. "I will relate two matters which seemed presages from God of what was approaching; having seen the first with my own eyes, and heard the second with my own ears. The first is, that, as the prince was crossing a river, an aged woman flung herself into the water which was deep, laid hold of his boot, and called out, 'Go on, prince; you will suffer much, but God will be with you.' To which the prince replied, 'My friend, pray to God for me.'" "The other," he adds, was, "that, in the evening, the prince being in bed, said to a minister who had been reading prayers, 'I know we shall have a battle to-morrow; we ought not to attend to dreams, yet I will tell you what I dreamed last night. It seemed to me that I

had given battle three times, obtaining the victory finally; and that I saw our three enemies dead, I myself having got my death-wound. I desired the three bodies to be laid on a table, and mine on the top of all, and thus gave up my soul to God.' . . . Strange to say, this dream was confirmed by the future; for the next day St. André, one of the three enemies, was killed; then, not long after, the duke of Guise; then the constable Montmorency; and, after the third battle, the prince himself." In one respect, however, the dream did not come true. The poor prince did not die a victor. Marshal St. André, it would appear, had his forebodings also; such is frequently the case. As he was going to horse, he chanced to hear that the duke had heard mass, and taken the sacrament before he breakfasted. "Ah!" he said, "how unhappy for me not to have done the same, and better prepared myself for what may befall me this day!"

Montmorency, though suffering severe pain and illness, went to battle against the heretics with a better courage. Brantome says, that every one rejoiced to see that fine old man show so resolute a countenance, though he had risen from a sick bed. He appeared in complete armour, and, when asked by Guise how he found himself, cheerfully answered, "The medicine which cures me is the coming battle, which is for the honour of God and the king." So strangely can the human mind deceive itself. But let us judge gently of one

another. Had such a speech been made on our side, we should probably applaud it. In this confident and rejoicing spirit, the constable attacked Condé's division of the Protestant army, and was completely beaten. It was Montmorency's first open engagement with the detested Huguenots, and we can imagine better than describe how filled with rage and confusion such a mind would be at such a result. Though weighed down with age and sickness, he made the most desperate efforts to rally his troops, but in vain ; he was struck from his horse, wounded, and taken prisoner.

The prince de Condé considered the victory to be his. Many of the first gentlemen and nobility of France were killed, or taken prisoners. A prematurely claimed victory is always dangerous. The undisciplined Huguenots ran shouting over the field ; order was abandoned ; the flying troops of Montmorency were wildly pursued ; pillage and triumph were all that were thought of. News of a victory, which the Protestants fondly deemed decisive of their fate, was despatched to Paris. Catharine de' Medici heard the tidings of the overthrow of her army, and the victory of the Protestants, and, in her characteristic manner, remarked : "Well, then, we inust all pray to God in French !!"*

The cautious, clear-sighted admiral Coligny did not share the general elation ; neither was

* It will be remembered, that the Protestants were prohibited from praying in French ; the prayers of the church of Rome being in Latin. To pray in French, then, meant to be Protestant.

he so quickly deceived as the prince. He beheld with uneasiness the disorder of the troops, the too eager pursuit, and the avidity of spoil, which, among other evils, had crept into the army that had at first been impressed with better feelings. He perceived that Guise had kept the reserved corps still unengaged ; but having looked on at the defeat and slaughter of his companions in arms, the general belief was that he would not engage at all. Posted on a hill, that veteran general beheld with coolness the confusion and defeat of his army, but watched, with perfect self-possession, for the moment when the exultation of a first actual victory in pitched battle should have elated to the wildest degree of incaution his opponent, and the soldiers he commanded ; with difficulty restraining the rising fury of his men, and the despair of Montmorency's son, who saw his aged father beaten down, wounded, and taken, without being allowed by Guise to bring him succour.

Coligny alone appeared to penetrate the design of Guise, and observed to some companion, "That cloud will soon break over us." It was as he said. Brantome, who was attached to the army, gives the following graphic account of his patron's conduct :—"The duke beheld the game of battle played and lost, the confusion and flight of our soldiers, and the disorderly pursuit of the Huguenots. . . . He looked around on all sides ; commanded us to open our ranks, and passed to the front ; still

looking about him leisurely, and rising in his stirrups, though he was of a grand and noble stature. Suddenly, knowing the time was come, he casts one quick look around, and cries aloud, ‘Come on, comrades, all is ours !’ and, in the twinkling of an eye, dashing the spurs into his horse, he joined St. André, and came down like a thunderbolt on the field of battle.”

The tide of victory was soon turned ; the disorder of the Protestant army was irretrievable. Condé, distracted with this reverse, made a desperate struggle, but was forced to retire, closely pursued, and still combating with the son of Montmorency, who was anxious to save his father. The prince’s horse was shot. He fell to the ground, and was taken prisoner by Montmorency’s son, while Montmorency himself remained a prisoner to the lately victorious prince. At the same time marshal St. André, another of the triumvirs, was killed in an engagement with some troops which Coligny had collected, and led against Guise. St. André was at first taken prisoner, but instantly shot by a Huguenot who owed him some personal enmity.

So ended this battle, which, it is said, is the most memorable in the civil wars, “ whether we consider the experienced chiefs then present, or the obstinacy with which the field was disputed ; and which, in every point of view, is worthy of all lamentation on account of the blood with which so many gentlemen of France bathed the earth.” Andelot was reported at first to have been among the slain ; but Coligny, as

soon as he saw the battle was lost, had sent him off with as many men as he could collect together to guard Orléans, knowing that the triumphant duke would direct his steps to that city.

In his reception and treatment of his prisoner, the prince de Condé, Guise showed all the urbanity and generosity for which he had been celebrated before the spirit of bigotry affected his conduct. He received him with respect and honour, led him to his own quarters, and entertained him in the best way he could. The baggage had been plundered, and few beds were to be had ; Guise offered his to the prince, who accepted it only on condition that the duke would consent to share it. Thus these two great rivals and adversaries “ lay down together as if they had been good friends and cousin-germans, which they ought to have been.”

Catharine showed as little exultation on hearing of the victory of Guise, as she had expressed grief on hearing of that of Condé. The immense popularity acquired by the duke was, to her view, enough to counterbalance the national triumph over the Protestants. Alas ! that a nation’s triumph should be so procured !

Ruin threatened the cause of Protestantism in France, but the brave Coligny did not yet despair. He took the command of the army in place of the captive prince. Andelot, “ a knight without fear,” defended Orléans, which Guise closely besieged. Coligny, who was posted in the neighbourhood, was obliged to

remain inactive ; the garrison made many sal-
lies on the besiegers, by which the latter lost
many men, and Andelot sent his brother word
that he would keep the duke before the walls
for at least three months. Coligny, therefore,
marched into Normandy to receive supplies
expected from England. But the hopes of
Andelot were unfounded, and his brother re-
ceived advice of the momentarily expected
capture of Orléans. As Andelot, if taken,
would, in all probability, be executed as a
traitor, Coligny was in great distress. He
took the town of Caen, and made prisoner the
brother of Guise, whom he kept as security for
his own brother.

The queen, by the advice of marshal de
Brissac, urged Guise to raise the siege of
Orléans, follow Coligny into Normandy, destroy
his army, and "drive the English into the sea." The duke replied, that the day was fixed for the assault of Orléans, when he would undoubtedly capture it, and "he hoped her majesty would not take it amiss, if he left no living thing within its walls, but slew even the dogs and cats, battered the town to the ground, and sowed its foundations with salt." Such is the language ascribed to him ; but as Montmorency was a prisoner in Orléans, attended by his niece, the princess de Condé, the gallant duke must have made *one* exception, at least, from all "the living things" that fated city contained. But his letter was of such a description, that the cold-hearted Catharine could observe, "To-

morrow, monsieur de Guise will cause a fine panic in Orléans." Such was certainly to be the case in the opinion of those who knew not what a day might bring forth, and talked of to-morrow as if its events were as well known to them as those of yesterday.

The case of Orléans was, indeed, hopeless, and there was no Jeanne d'Arc this time to deliver it. But a less noble deliverer was at hand, a less glorious succour arrived. On the evening preceding that memorable "to-morrow," the duke of Guise was riding to his quarters in the dark, from the trenches where he had been examining the works. A white plume in his hat distinguished him in the gloom, and afforded a mark for the murderer, who, screened by a hedge, took his deadly aim as the duke passed him. Three pistol-balls struck him. Guise bent to the saddle-bow, but instantly raising himself, said, "This was to be expected ; but I think it will be nothing."

He was conveyed to his quarters ; the wound, at first not considered dangerous, was probably rendered mortal by the surgery practised at the time. It was cauterised with hot iron, to destroy the effects of poison, in case the balls had been poisoned ; and other barbarous measures were resorted to. Aware of his approaching death, he met it with calmness. "Finding himself," says Beza, "surprised by death in such a splendid career of greatness, he would willingly have lived longer, but surmounted that desire in his last hours. He acknowledged something

of his wrongs against those of the 'religion,' and spoke affectionately to his family."

It is said that Guise accused himself of having caused too much blood to be shed in France; and, on his dying bed, denied, even with anxiety to be believed, that he had caused, or sanctioned, the massacre at Vassy; the recollection of which, it thus appears, would return to him, although we may conclude that the priests who ministered to him would not recall it. The bishop who attended his last hours wrote an account of his death, and asserts that the dying duke said to those around his bed, "I beg you will believe that the misfortune which happened at Vassy occurred against my wishes. I was the defender, and not the aggressor." The power of death is great! Truth at that hour regains her sway. The just will be just still, and the holy will be holy still; but the unjust and the unholy will never wish to continue so. Guise, who, in his late years, seemed only to live for the exercise of his power, and the extermination of heretics, then also changed his sentiments, and, in his last advice to Catharine, recommended mild and tolerant measures.

"He was," says a French author, "the greatest man our age produced, and every way worthy of praise, whether we regard his military skill and success, or his extreme prudence in the conduct of affairs. Truly it would appear that he was designed for the ornament and good of France, had he fallen on

better times. But the kingdom being divided into parties, he being a man of lofty mind, overstepped the duty of a subject, at the persuasion of his brother, the cardinal, and when he had legitimately no supreme command in army or state, he made use of his personal qualities, splendid talents, and universal popularity, to force himself into the highest authority." If there had been no cardinal of Lorraine, it is tolerably certain that the name of the celebrated duke of Guise would have come down to posterity divested of much of that odium which must attach to the character of a violent and unrelenting religious persecutor. It was the pride, intolerance, and ambition of these two men which caused the chief part of the miseries of their country. Guise was not a man of education; his life was devoted to arms, and not to learning: the reverse was the case with his brother, the cardinal. It was natural that, in all religious questions, he should be guided by the opinions of the theologian, his own consisting in nothing more than obedience to the church, whose power, wealth, and greatness it was the interest of his family to support.

The story related by Beza of his mistake about the Bible, at Vassy, might be amusing under other circumstances. "While they," the followers of the duke, "were pillaging and defacing the chapel, a Bible, used in the service, was brought to the duke, who, holding it in his hand, said to the cardinal, 'Look here, brother, this is one of the accursed Huguenot's books.' The cardinal looked at it, and an-

swered, ‘There is not much harm in that; it is the Holy Scripture.’” The duke, not understanding this, went into a greater fury than before. “How!” he cried, “the Holy Scripture! Why, it is more than fifteen hundred years since the death and passion of Jesus Christ, and it is only one since this book was printed! Do you call that the Holy Scripture?”

The Huguenot leaders, especially Coligny, were accused of engaging an assassin to murder the duke of Guise. The suspicion was natural, and there might have appeared grounds for an accusation which has never, in any way, been proved, though the charge has never been wholly withdrawn. Poltrot, the assassin, took the basest means of delivering the Protestants, and the people of Orléans, from their formidable foe. He came to Coligny’s army with the declared intention of seeking out Guise in battle, and killing him on the open field of war, a declaration which Coligny did not deny having received. But when the admiral led his troops from the vicinity of Orléans, he introduced himself to the camp of Guise, and told the duke he abjured the errors of Protestantism, and wished to return to the old religion, and to the service of the king.

Guise received him kindly; his appearance was prepossessing, and his family of some distinction. He ordered an apartment to be prepared for the young man, and invited him to dine with him. By this gross treachery, the deed was accomplished, which left a re-

proach, without really conferring any great or lasting benefit on the cause of the Protestants. Coligny was indignant at the charge brought against him, and wrote to the queen to clear himself, offering to go and confront the wretched assassin, (who was frightfully tortured to obtain confession,) provided his own safety would be guaranteed; but this was not accorded.

The death of Guise caused an instant revolution in the aspect of Protestant affairs. Orléans was saved; the words of Catharine de' Medici were not verified—the “TO-MORROW” was passed in safety.

The captivity, meantime, of the prince de Condé had not proved beneficial to his moral interests. A disposition too much inclined to pleasure, had been worked upon by the arts of the queen, and those of the brilliant and beautiful ladies she assembled at her court. This rendered him more desirous of peace; and he yielded to terms which were considered to betray the Protestant interests, at the very moment when the loss of their great defender might have made the Roman Catholic party more willing to make some tolerating concessions. The liberty of worship, for which they and Coligny had fought, was rather restricted than increased by the treaty of peace. But the prince and all his adherents were declared faithful subjects, as having taken up arms “with good and pure intentions;” consequently no punishments were to take place.

This treaty stipulated that Roman Catholics

and Huguenots should unite their arms to expel the English from France, who had been invited thither by the latter. This they did most warmly, to the great surprise of our queen Elizabeth, who saw her armies beaten by her allies. So eager were Frenchmen to wipe out the disgrace of having brought English garrisons into France, that the Huguenots fought with greater zeal against their Protestant auxiliaries than they had shown against their Roman Catholic adversaries. The prince de Condé offered himself to expel them from Havre, which town was forced to capitulate, though the following morning earl Warwick, the governor, who had just surrendered, saw the English fleet appearing with supplies and help.

The polite message of the French commander to the English admiral is worthy of repetition. He sent to inform him that Havre was then in the possession of the king of France, but if he wished to land for refreshment, the queen would be happy to entertain him; for, as his majesty had recovered what belonged to him, he had no intention to quarrel further with the queen of England. When Elizabeth's anger had subsided, she said the king of France was happy in having such faithful subjects.

Coligny was extremely displeased with the terms Condé had made for the Protestants. In his letter to Catharine, clearing himself from all knowledge of the murder of the duke of Guise, he had used a degree of candour which a treacherous and guilty man would fear

to utter. "Do not suppose," he said, "that I feel any regret for the death of Guise. I consider it the best thing that could have happened for the kingdom, for the church of God, and my own family."

All the advantages, however, which might have arisen from the removal of Guise were lost to the Protestants by the precipitation of Condé. The admiral told him his pen had destroyed more churches, in signing that treaty, than their enemies would have done in a long war. By restricting the number of places of worship, he said, the poor people, who had fought as well as the nobility for their liberty, were left exposed to the danger of returning again to the superstitions of Rome, or of living without any religion; for it could not be expected that working men, old people, and women, could travel, weekly, twenty or thirty miles to find a place of worship. And what security for its faithful performance could exist, if its assemblies were only held in the castles of the Protestant nobles? The religion of the people would be subject to the caprice of the nobility; and if estates should pass into the hands of Roman Catholics, what might become of the church? Calvin and Beza, with many other ministers, seconded these complaints, telling Condé he would be the first to lament his want of firmness; which, indeed, was soon the case. The treaty was signed, and could not be revoked. Peace once more was restored; the horrors of a civil and religious war subsided—alas! to be soon renewed!

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES IX.

PART III.

THE removal of the powerful and ambitious Guise left to Catharine de' Medici the undivided authority for which she thirsted, to the desire for which every other passion was subservient. Her son, under her training, promised to be worthy of such a mother. It was not, perhaps, in her power to make him great, for her own nature possessed no real greatness; but she is allowed to have done what she could to make him wicked.

Whatever good qualities the unhappy boy might have naturally possessed were annihilated or corrupted, not under her influence alone, but under that also of his governor and chief friend, marshal De Retz, who was one of the very worst characters that, or any other age, could produce. One of the accomplishments the youthful monarch acquired from him was that of swearing. "At court," says Brantome, "we held him to be the greatest blasphemer that ever was heard; so that the king learned this vice, and became so habituated to it, that this horrid speech and blas-

phemy seemed to him a mere form of discourse, which was more gallant and brave than sinful. For which cause he made no difficulty in breaking his word whenever it came into his head to do so. . . In fine weather, he was always in action, out of doors; for he hated being in the house, and called a house the grave of the living." Charles IX., who is to be pitied as living thus, from childhood, the victim of wicked people, had a rough and violent temper, which was stimulated, rather than controlled, by the evil guardians of his education.

In the year 1563, the famous council of Trent, so often appealed to as an exponent of the sentiments of the church of Rome, touching the Protestants, closed its sittings. This council, which was convened with a view to procure that church-reform for which all men saw the necessity, save those whose interests were opposed to it, only tended to ratify the errors that ought to have been corrected. Cardinal Lorraine appeared there in all the pomp for which his proud family were celebrated. Opportunity was there afforded for consulting on the state of France; and the entire extermination of heresy was afterwards pressed for by the ambassadors sent to Charles, by the pope, the king of Spain, and the duke of Savoy.

Catharine, fearing a renewal of the war, and probably the chancellor also, made Charles answer in the evasive manner of a statesman, that "he would live in the religion of his ancestors, and was disposed to render justice to all his sub-

jects." The efforts of bigotry, however, and of really mistaken as well as unjust policy, did not cease. Persecution in varied forms still continued. The pope's nuncio at Paris, wrote to cardinal Borromeo: "In a short time we shall have no Huguenots in France: every one acknowledges how much we are indebted to the good counsels of your eminence."

The queen took the young monarch on a tour through his kingdom; this tour was made with all the show and splendour usual on such occasions. Unhappily, the spectacle of ravages committed by the Huguenots on churches, wherein they themselves had once been worshippers, on monasteries and works of art, which fell before a ruthless and ignorant fury, greatly tended to excite his violent disposition, and to deepen the bitter feelings that had already been implanted against his Protestant subjects. The others hailed him with cries of "Long live the king, the queen, and the mass!"

In this royal progress, the crafty queen is believed to have taken measures for the complete annihilation of Protestantism. At Bayonne, on the frontier of Spain, Charles met his unhappy sister, the queen of Spain; and there their mother conferred with the duke of Alva, whose name is so terrible in the annals of oppression, both of Protestantism and liberty. They used to meet in a private gallery at night to hold these consultations, which we may conclude were well suited to the hour that was chosen for them.

From Bayonne the king went to Navarre, to visit the queen, his relative. Wherever he had power he restored the Roman Catholic worship and churches; but Jeanne would not allow him to interfere in her dominions. He tried urgently to get her to do so, but without success.

An embassy subsequently waited upon him from the Protestant princes in Germany, soliciting justice, protection, and full religious liberty for the Huguenots. Charles, young as he was, is said to have been so angry at the demand, that, to avoid breaking out in unseemly expressions, he was obliged to keep silence for some minutes. He was, however, remarkable for receiving ambassadors with an air of dignity and grace, very unusual to him on common occasions; and when he had gained sufficient self-command, he made a spirited reply, which showed he had forgotten his own urgency with the queen of Navarre. He told the deputies that he was willing to be on good terms with their masters, provided they would interfere as little with his government as he did with theirs; adding, "I am, however, greatly inclined to beg of them to allow the mass and Catholic preachers in their towns."

The king caused a band of confederated Roman Catholics to be formed, which was called by the strange title of "The Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit." Each member was sworn not to divulge the purpose of the association; and this, with other more alarming appearances, made the Protestants justly uneasy, as they

concluded this secret purpose was against them.

Two attempts had been made by assassination against the life of Coligny, as well as the open and public one, headed by the duchess of Guise, who, in deep mourning, knelt at the king's feet, imploring justice upon him as her husband's murderer. But Charles received him with favour, and he met with the greatest honour at court. Notwithstanding, the sage admiral, undazzled by the pleasures that seduced Condé, saw the dangers that menaced his party, and warned the prince to prepare for them.

This admired and unfortunate prince had fallen an easy prey to the snares of a treacherous and ungodly court. He was led away by its sinful pleasures: Catharine contrived it should be so. His wife died, afflicted by the thoughtless conduct of one who, in the hour of trial and prospect of a violent death, had shown much magnanimity of spirit and great tenderness of feeling for her. But Condé, like many men of a similar temperament, could resist the fear of death more firmly than the love of pleasure. Two of the most beautiful and wealthy ladies of the court tried to rival each other in his affections, and gifts and favours were showered upon him. The hour of trial was at hand.

Oppression on one side, resistance and complaints on the other, disturbed the tranquillity of the country, and injured the spiritual interests of the reformed church. "These things," says a Roman Catholic writer, "so

changed and heated the mind of the king, whose hatred against those who opposed his will increased with his years, that he was night and day in secret council with his mother, to find out some means of uprooting the evil. . . . The queen exhorted him to dissimulation and to patience, as did the cardinal Lorraine; . . . for though they rejoiced at this change of feeling, yet did they wish it to be concealed until the right time came. But there being no end to the suspicions of the Huguenots, and to the bloody dissensions of the people, and the prince and admiral now frequenting, and now quitting the court, always bringing thither new complaints and solicitations, the king could bear it no longer, and it was resolved now to aid art by force, and restrain the license of the discontented." From such a version of the case we can clearly judge what the reality was.

One of the severest trials to the Protestants at this period, arose from a command issued by government, for all monks and nuns who had embraced the reformed religion, to return to their convents, and, of course, recant their profession of faith. Many of the clergy who had become Protestants, had married, and were now called on to divorce their wives. In their churches, too, they had celebrated the reformed service; but now these places of worship returned to the church to which they had belonged. Besides all this, came private reasons of dissatisfaction. The ambition of Condé, which his own enemies, and the enemies of his cause,

affirmed to aspire even to the throne, had been flattered by Catharine, who promised him the important office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom: but her partiality, or policy, now caused her to bestow it on her favourite son, the brilliant and handsome duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III., then only sixteen years of age. And to arouse still more the high spirit of the prince de Condé, the royal youth was allowed, or incited, to insult the experienced general, by asking Condé how he had the presumption to aspire to such a charge, and threatening to "make him as little as he wished to be great."

A peace so ill maintained, both politically and religiously, was not likely to continue. The Protestants once more took arms. In the sight of a multitude assembled on the heights adjoining Paris, the battle of St. Denis was fought between these fellow-countrymen. The Huguenots, headed by the prince de Condé, fought so furiously, that the Turkish ambassador, who was among the crowds of spectators, exclaimed, that, with their aid, his master would soon conquer the world. They fought desperately, for they fought for all that is dear to men, and fought for almost their last hope.

Old Montmorency, at the battle of St. Denis, performed his last exploit against "the heretics," and died, as he declared he was ready to do, fighting against them, though they were commanded by his own nephews, men whose spirit, character, and abilities, he must have

admired. As Guise was gone, he commanded the royal, or Roman Catholic army ; it was the first battle he ever won, and the last he ever fought. He had been four times wounded, and was still engaged, when Robert Stuart (who was accused and tortured on suspicion of shooting the unjust judge of Dubourg) rode up and presented a pistol at him. Montmorency, seeing his aim, called out, "I am the constable." "And, therefore," said Stuart, "I present you with this," and fired on the old general. Montmorency's friends took him alive from among the dead and dying. He did not wish to be removed, saying, he could not die upon a better field, for which death he thanked God.

His religion consisted rather in sentiments of loyalty, and attachment to old institutions, than to anything else. Thus, when a monk came to confess him, and prepare him for death, after the manner of the Romish observances, the old man petulantly said, "Leave me, father—leave me ; I have not lived in honour for seventy-seven years, without having learned to die for a quarter of an hour."

Montmorency had promised the people of Paris that they should see him return either dead or victorious. They saw him in both respects. But the king's victory was dearly bought. The prince de Condé might now remember his dream before the battle of Dreux. The "three enemies" were dead—Guise, St. André, and Montmorency ; names that held a high place in the history of their time. He might now recol-

lect the prediction of his dream, that his own body was laid upon theirs!

The fearful spirit engendered by civil war was shortly afterwards shown at Nismes, where the Huguenots massacred a number of their cruel persecutors. This crime was committed by those who professed to have dissented from the church of Rome, and protested against its errors, and who, therefore, should have shown a better spirit than their adversaries. But it was true then as it is now, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel;” not all are of the spirit of Christ who are called Christians. The Huguenots followed the example set them, and took vengeance into their own hands. Yet these scenes, and this bloody battle, might have been prevented, if the reasonable demands of Condé, on behalf of the Protestants, had been granted.

In a previous conference with Montmorency, the prince had demanded “permission to exercise publicly the worship of the reformed religion.” Montmorency replied, that the king had never intended the privileges he granted the Huguenots to continue, but was resolved to have only one religion in France. Such had before been the answer of queen Catharine.

At the battle of St. Denis, cardinal Chatillon, the brother of Coligny and Andelot, fought in the Huguenot army; and Brantome asserts that the former, the cardinal, “did very well, and fought very valiantly.” He afterwards escaped into England, disguised as a sailor, and was

more usefully and suitably employed in negotiation, than he had been in the field of battle.

A short peace was concluded, and quickly broken. The Protestants rallied from all parts, took possession of the sea-port of Rochelle, and fortified it. The queen of Navarre and her son, the prince de Bearn, who had been in danger of being seized and carried off to Spain, joined the troop within the walls, and Rochelle was made the Protestant stronghold.

Pope Pius v., whom Rome canonized for his labours against heresy, wrote thus to Charles ix. :—" We pray Almighty God, who is the Lord of hosts . . . mercifully to grant your majesty the victory over our common enemies. When God shall have given, as we trust, the victory to your majesty, it will then be for you to punish, with the utmost rigour, the heretics and their leaders, because they are the enemies of God, and you must avenge on them, not your own injuries only, but the injuries of Almighty God." Thus encouraged by the head of his church, is it wonderful that Charles overstepped the boundaries, even of such a conscience as his, on St. Bartholomew's day?

The young duke of Anjou, the king's next brother, signalized himself in the command of the royal army, as lieutenant-general of France. The gallant Condé was surprised and forced into a battle for which he was every way quite unprepared. It was his last. He had been wounded previously in the arm, and, when joining battle, was further disabled by a kick

from the horse of his friend, the count Roche foucault. Perhaps it was a foreboding of the issue of this engagement which led him to call on his friends and followers to "remember the state in which Louis of Bourbon went into battle for his religion and his country." As he said the words, he stooped forward in his saddle, and rushed onward at the head of a brave, but devoted, little band, which combated, until crushed by superior numbers. It is said that an old Huguenot fell, with twenty-five grandsons, on one heap of slain.

Condé was struck from his horse, and obliged to surrender his sword; two gentlemen led the brave prince away, a prisoner of war, and seated him, exhausted and faint, beneath a hedge. There, while courteously conversing with some officers, the captain of the duke of Anjou's Swiss guards galloped past, and returning, asked who the prisoner was. They answered it was the prince de Condé. "Kill—kill—for the love of God!" was the brutal reply, and he drew a pistol from his belt. The unfortunate prince, seeing his coming fate, bent forward, screening his face with his hand, and the savage shot him through the head.

Thus ignominiously died the brave and admired prince de Condé. The body of the man, to be whose wife the most beautiful and proudest of the ladies of the court had contended, was thrown over an ass, and led through the royal army, before the eyes of the people, who had both admired and feared him. The young

prince de Bearn afterwards received, and buried it in the tomb of his fathers.

A few days before Condé's death, some remark which he accidentally made, called forth this admonition from a pure-hearted Protestant. "Sir, it appears to me, from your observations, that you are more influenced by ambition than religion ; if such be the case, I quit you. Let us join for the service of God, or I must retire." The prince was able to satisfy the expostulator ; but, if ambition were indeed the spring that actuated him, behold where it stopped ! From a history so full of interest, a profitable lesson may be gained : it carries its own moral, without any comments.

"Thus died Louis de Bourbon Condé," says a Roman Catholic historian, "a prince of the blood royal, more illustrious for his warlike courage, and great virtues, than for his splendid birth. Valour, constancy, wit, address, sagacity, politeness, elegance, and liberality, were all united in him."

The duke of Anjou had begun this bloody day by receiving the sacrament "with all the princes and captains of his host." At the age of sixteen years, we do not expect to find a general with a world-hardened heart ; yet, this youth, after having looked at the body of his relative borne on an ass through his camp, wished to erect a chapel of thanksgiving on the spot where he had been murdered ! Some friends, however, represented to his immature experience, that, by doing so, he might only erect a monument of his own infamy.

At this battle, Robert Stuart was taken prisoner, and shot, for the death of Montmorency. "Men of bloods and deceit shall not live out half their days."—(Marg. reading.)

After the fall of Condé, admiral Coligny caused the young prince de Bearn, son of the late king of Navarre, to be appointed to the chief command of the Protestant army. This young prince was only sixteen, and his colleague, the young Condé, son of the late prince, was not quite so much. The former, however, already gave evidence of the talents which distinguished him as Henry of Navarre, and afterwards as Henry IV. of France. Thus both armies were ostensibly commanded by generals of sixteen years old.

Notwithstanding the exhortations of the pope to the contrary, who urged a continuance of war until heresy should be exterminated, a peace on very favourable terms was granted to the Protestants in the month of August, 1570. France had been desolated by civil war; the state was weary of it; and the people were ruined by it. Still, the Protestants, made suspicious by a long course of treachery and falsehood, apprehended danger even from the favour they met. There is reason to fear their suspicions were not unfounded. Certainly the conduct of the king, now about twenty-two years of age, to the leaders of the Protestants, who expected to be regarded only as traitors and rebels, was calculated to convey suspicions of insincerity. Before this time, one of those leaders, the good Andelot, had gone to rest,

not killed in battle, but carried off by illness. His brother, the admiral, writing to their children, who lived together at Rochelle, and were educated by one tutor, after proposing his brother as their example, and speaking of his virtues, says to them, "Now be assured that his reputation was not acquired by sloth or idleness, but by the great labours he endured for his country. Truly I never knew a man more righteous, or more devoted to piety. . . . I humbly pray our Lord God to give me grace to quit this life, as happily and piously as I saw him leave it. Regretting him as I do, I ask you to temper my grief by showing his virtues reviving in you; and that for this end you will give your whole hearts to religion, and employ your time in the study of letters. Take care in your amusements to do nothing that can in any way offend God. Let me hear good intelligence that you increase in piety and virtue, as in years and strength."

The most continual and pressing solicitations at last brought the admiral to the court of Charles ix. His reception cannot allow us to believe otherwise than that the young king, like his colder-blooded mother, was a most treacherous character. When Coligny knelt to Charles, he raised the venerable admiral, saluted him as "his father," and expressed a most extraordinary degree of joy, saying, that moment was the happiest of his life. "I hold you!" he cried— "Yes, I hold you now, and you shall leave me no more." But while such language, on first

meeting a man he must have long regarded as an enemy, bears, legibly, the stamp of insincerity, it is generally believed that this unhappy young king really did become considerably attached to Coligny; that he admired and respected him; and, finally, only yielded to his mother's hatred against, and to his own irritation at, the admiral's continued solicitations on behalf of the Protestants, and at his urgency with him to undertake a war in the Netherlands against the bigoted tyrant Philip of Spain.

Although remarkable for caution, the admiral, in all his intercourse with Charles IX., appears to have acted with the incaution of a good and sincere person, who believes that disinterested advice will be well received by one younger and less experienced. Coligny knew that Catharine was a dangerous character, but appears to have acted as if he never thought she could be dangerous to him. He believed that she exercised a most pernicious influence over her son; and, if he did not tell the king so,* he is admitted to have advised him to take the supreme authority into his own hands. But, in giving this advice, did he forget, or did he disregard, the fact, that that son had been for twenty-two years habituated to the influence which he wished him, for the interests of his people, to shake off? The advice was well

* The frequent and private conversations of the young king with the admiral, excited the jealousy of his vigilant mother. Having once tauntingly asked him what he learned from admiral Coligny, Charles, thrown into anger, replied, that he learned that his mother was his real enemy.

received at the time; but amongst relations, influences so long established cannot easily be set aside; and he who attempts to interfere with them, however noble himself, or however good his counsel, is very likely to fall a sacrifice to his zeal.

Notwithstanding the constant, and even vehement, pressing of the admiral, the king forbore to undertake, with his Protestant troops, the conquest of Flanders, recently subjugated by the king of Spain. Coligny was not aware, or did not care to remark, that Catharine was totally opposed to his wishes, and anxious to circumvent them. Neither did he understand the character of the young king, in whom, it would appear, he really was interested. He saw some good, and, making allowances for an evil education, he probably imagined much more.

That Catharine had her own designs, whether at first her wretched son participated in them or not, is well known. The chief Protestants of France were induced to come to Paris, and were received at court with so much favour as to make some of them suspicious. One ostensible cause of this resort to the capital, was the marriage of the young prince de Bearn, the late commander-in-chief of the Huguenot army, with the princess Margaret, the sister of Charles ix., who would much have preferred marrying the young duke de Guise. The pope opposed this marriage, as the prince was a Protestant; but Charles said his sister would convert

him ; the pope, on the contrary, said he feared the conversion might be on the other side.

Margaret, however, had been a firm Roman Catholic in her childhood. She has already been mentioned as one of the few “good Catholics” of the royal palace, while her time-serving mother encouraged the Protestant faith. The proof of her stedfastness is derived from her own personal memoirs. Margaret, unlike her great-aunt of the same name, the sister of Francis I., who also became queen of Navarre, thus writes of her resistance to Protestantism when not eight years old :—“ I made great efforts to keep my religion, while the whole court was infected with heresy ; notwithstanding the persuasions of many ladies and gentlemen, and of my brother, Anjou, whose childhood had not escaped the influence of that evil Huguenoterie. He persecuted me to change my religion, throwing my books into the fire, and making me take the Huguenot psalms and prayers instead, which I brought to my governess, a good Catholic, whom it pleased God to preserve to me. She often took me to that excellent man, cardinal Tournon, who exhorted me to suffer all things for my religion, and would give me other books in the place of those my brother burned. But others would blame me, and say, that all who had any sense, after having heard Christ once preached, turned from my bigoted religion. My brother sometimes would add threats, and tell me that the queen, my mother, would have me whipped.”

Yet seldom has there been a more licentious and ungodly woman than this stedfast little girl grew up to be. Truly history "teaches by example." This young Anjou, who persecuted his little sister to become a Protestant, possessed no religion himself, having fallen in merely with what was for the moment fashionable at court. We have seen him at the age of sixteen, the general of the army against the Protestants; he took a chief part in the Protestant murders about to be recorded, and was himself, when king of France, assassinated by a Romish monk, as an enemy of the Roman Catholic league. Such is human consistency, when the gospel and grace of God do not impart knowledge and power to order our steps after his word.

The marriage of the Protestant prince, and late general of their army, with the sister of the king, afforded a reason for assembling the chief families of the Protestant religion at Paris.

The princess Margaret, who felt only indifference, or dislike, to the husband chosen for her, and detested his religion, would not reply to the question, which demanded if she would take him for her husband. The king, her brother, made her bend her head, and the movement was taken for an assent. The usual fêtes and rejoicings followed. In the midst of these, Coligny, who was in high favour with the king, and with whom the king, in return, was in favour also, brought to him some petitions from his Protestant brethren,

Charles answered, “ My father, give me four or five days to enjoy myself, and then, on the faith of a king, I pledge myself that you and all those of your religion shall be satisfied.”

For the space of two years, the professions of the king’s attachment to Coligny had now continued. Most persons consider it probable that he really had been impressed by the grave sincerity and deep piety of the admiral’s character—qualities so foreign to this court, so little known to himself,—but that the constant importunities of Protestantism, his own vicious principles, and the evil ascendancy his mother had over him, rendered him at last both a partner in her plot, and a victim to her cruelty. We can, however, find no ground for excusing Charles ix., except by believing him the mind-enfeebled slave of a domineering parent, or the victim of a perverted conscience. Two days after the royal promise given to Coligny, as just related, that venerable man was shot in the street, as he came, reading, from the palace of the Louvre, towards his house. The wound was not mortal, and the assassin, instantly mounting a fleet horse, belonging to the royal stables, that was kept in waiting, made his escape.

The most natural account of this well-known plot against the Protestants, which was now to be put into execution, appears to be this. Admiral Coligny, their head and protector, was to be assassinated : the Protestants, assembled previously in Paris, (being almost all those of rank or consequence in France,) would ascribe

the deed to the Guises, who longed for vengeance for the late duke's death; and a popular tumult, or attack on that family, would give excuse for the massacre, for which preparations had long been made, though with the greatest secrecy. The duke of Anjou records that, when the death of Coligny was proposed, Charles jumped from his seat, shouting aloud, in one of those furious bursts of passion for which he was too celebrated, "swearing horribly, that if the admiral were to be killed, not a single Huguenot should be left alive in France to call him the murderer. He then rushed from that dreadful council, at which his mother presided, and left them," says his brother, "to carry on their consultations for the rest of the evening, and a great part of the night."

The object of this consultation was to decide on the plan of Protestant extermination. As the admiral was not killed by the assassin, the plot changed its character, and the massacre of the Protestants came to be more public, and more directly authorized by the court than it was probably intended to be at first.

It was afterwards recollected, that one of the curious spectacles exhibited for the amusement of the court, on occasion of the royal marriage, might be considered typical of the fate preparing for Protestantism in France. After the fashion of the mysteries, or strange religious representations of an ignorant age, one side of a large hall was made to represent heaven, the entrance to which was guarded by the king of

France and his brothers. On the other was hell, hideously depicted with all sorts of absurd accompaniments. The king of Navarre, with some of his Protestant friends, appeared as armed knights in the scene, and attacked the guards of heaven, seeking to force an entrance, but were repulsed, driven, by the king of France and his brothers, into hell, and shut up there. Navarre—for the prince de Bearn, by the death of his mother, became king—had, probably, never thought of the application of the piece, but it gave great displeasure to many of the Protestants.

The intelligence of Coligny's being wounded enraged king Charles. Both the king of Navarre and prince de Condé came to him, with tears in their eyes, to demand justice on the duke of Guise, as the reputed author of the crime; but, seeing his grief and rage, they went away, satisfied that Charles was innocent of all knowledge of the deed, and would bring its authors to punishment.

The admiral's right arm was amputated. The Protestants viewed, in despair, the loss of that arm which had so long and bravely contended for them: but Catharine and her council were plunged into greater consternation by finding that he still lived. His chamber was soon crowded by ministers of his religion, and nobles, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, who felt indignation at so base an act. The son of constable Montmorency said, that he suspected whence the blow had come. “I

suspect no one," said Coligny, whose confidence in the king was unshaken, "except Guise, and I am not certain there. But, by the grace of God, I have learned not to fear my enemies; the worst they can do is to bring me to my heavenly rest. . . . One thing afflicts me, that I cannot show the king how greatly I desire to serve him."

In consequence of the wish expressed to speak to him, Charles, without guards, but with his court, visited the suffering admiral. He said to him, "My father, you are wounded, but it is I who suffer." Throughout the rest of that day the king is described as being in a dreadful state of rage, excitement, and indecision. Catharine had gone too far to recede, and it was necessary to force her wretched son to be her accomplice. This she did by fully convincing him of the dangers that would result from the just indignation of the Protestants. Whatever dislike Charles might feel for the murder of Coligny, he afterwards not only consented to, but entirely co-operated in the murder of his Protestant subjects.

It had been predicted that the wedding favours of Navarre would be crimson; so uneasy was the feeling of some who were not so entirely deceived as the old admiral. The unhappy bride describes the state of the palace on the following night, in terms which recall the memory of this saying:—"I saw," says Margaret, "every one in commotion. . . . I knew nothing of what was going on; I was not trusted

by the Huguenots, because I was a Catholic, nor by the Catholics, because the king of Navarre, my husband, was a Protestant. I was in the bed-room of the queen, my mother ; my sister saw that I was sad. My mother told me to go to bed; but as I made my curtsey to retire, my sister burst into tears, and caught my arm, saying, 'Don't go, sister.' This terrified me. But my mother called to her not to tell me anything. She replied, that it was dreadful to send me away to be sacrificed. . . . My mother observed, that, unless it were the will of God, no harm would happen to me; but, at all events, I must go, or something would be suspected." This was the night of the ever-memorable massacre of St. Bartholomew's day —the night which ushered in that day of blood.

The king made the same attempt as Margaret's sister had done, to retain with him a favourite Protestant companion, whose pleasant society had tended to amuse that dreadful evening. He asked the count de la Rochefoucault to stay and sleep with his attendants; but the unsuspecting nobleman refused, and left the royal murderer, saying gaily, "Good night, my little master!" using the term "little" as the French sometimes do, as expressive of one of familiar endearment. On receiving this parting salutation, the young monarch remarked, "I see clearly that God wills he should perish!" Charles, however, kept his surgeon, a Huguenot, but one, he said, he could not do without, in his own chamber.

Before the dawn of day, queen Catharine and her two sons opened a window in the Louvre, and looked out. A pistol-shot was heard; it was a fatal signal "The report," said the duke of Anjou, "filled us with such sudden horror, that we lost all sense and judgment. Seized with terror at thoughts of the great evils about to be committed, we sent a gentleman to desire the duke of Guise to proceed no further against admiral Coligny." The weakly-guilty monarch would, at the last moment, have arrested the crime for which he had already issued both arms and orders. But it was then commenced; and, when once begun, his horror and hesitation passed away.

The tolling of the cathedral bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, close to the palace of the Louvre, was the signal for Protestant slaughter. The duke of Guise was to begin it by the murder of Coligny. Companies of citizens had been formed to continue it, and the guards of the duke of Anjou, professedly stationed for the safety of the Protestant dwellings, after the attack on the admiral, were ready to despatch the people they pretended to guard from danger. A white band on the left arm and a white cross in the hat, distinguished the citizen troops. The streets were suddenly illuminated by flambeaux, and lights blazed in the windows of the Louvre.

The wounded Coligny, reposing on the faith of a king, was sleeping, as a Christian at peace with God may sleep. The doors of his house

were burst open ; a horrified attendant appeared in his room. The admiral asked what was the matter. " My lord, God calls us to himself !" was the answer : a beautiful one, and worthy of a follower of Coligny.

" Save yourselves, my friends," replied the admiral. " All is over with me ; I have long been ready to die." The murderer appeared. " Art thou Coligny ?" he demanded. " Truly I am he," was the martyr's reply. " Young man, you ought to respect my grey hairs." He was instantly killed.

Guise with his comrades were under the window, and to satisfy the former that the opponent of his father was really dead, the body of the murdered old man was thrown out of it to them. That window is still to be seen in Paris. Guise wiped the blood from the venerable face, to see if it were the very same, and then said, " Venomous beast ! thou canst no more infuse thy poison." Ah ! how little did he then foresee that his own dead body would be thus spurned by a royal foot, and these very words repeated over it ! The martyr of Protestantism was gone to be with that all over-ruling God who maketh even the wrath of man to praise him. And what mattered it to him that his lifeless clay was dragged in wild triumph through the streets, mutilated and gibbeted ?

The general massacre commenced, Guise leading it on, and crying to the soldiers and citizens that it was by the king's order ; ex-

horting them to kill every Huguenot. They did not need exhortation.

“The streets,” says a French writer, “were covered with mangled bodies. The door-ways, both of palaces and private dwellings, were deep in blood. Yells and murderous cries filled the air, mingled with reports of pistols and muskets: the shrieks of the slaughtered, and the sound of the dead falling from windows, or from the tops of the houses, or dragged along the ground with hideous howlings. . . . Houses were sacked and robbed. Carts passed, sometimes filled with spoil, sometimes loaded with dead to be cast into the Seine.” That river was red with the blood that ran through the streets, and more especially through the court of the Louvre, the king’s own palace, in the neighbourhood of which nearly all the Protestants had been brought to reside. The massacre was carried on with equal diligence within the very walls of that palace.

Margaret, the new-made queen of Navarre, continues her relation of the events of that horrible night in a strain which appears too light, in some of its details, for such a subject. She had fallen asleep in the uneasy state of mind before mentioned, when a loud cry of “Navarre, Navarre!” with a violent knocking at her chamber door, make her nurse, who was watching with her, run to open it. A Protestant gentleman, covered with blood, and closely pursued by four archers of

the royal guard, rushed in, and, as the terrified queen sprang from her bed, he caught her, to protect himself, in his arms, interposing her person between him and the murderers. Their united screams brought the captain of the guard, who, she says, could not forbear laughing, but reprimanded the soldiers; and Margaret hid the poor wounded Protestant in her closet, and, when he was cured, obtained his pardon. "While I was changing my night-dress," says the young queen, "the captain told me what was going on, but assured me the king, my husband, was safe, and in the royal apartments with the king, my brother: and, throwing a cloak over me, led me to my sister Lorraine, more dead than alive with fright. As I entered the ante-chamber, a gentleman, who was flying from the archers, received a stroke from a halberd, and fell dead at my feet. I fainted, and the captain thought the same stroke had killed us both. Soon after, two gentlemen of the court came to implore me to save them; I went and threw myself at the feet of the king and queen, and at last obtained my request." Such is the light, yet fearful description of the scenes that passed in the royal palace of her brother and mother, given by the newly-married queen of Navarre—whose wedding favours indeed were crimson.

The unfortunate count de la Rochefoucault, who would not remain with Charles, having spent some of the intervening time in a continuance of those idle pleasures, which formed

no preparation for such a sequel to the evening, had gone late to his house, and, when awakened by the uproar, he imagined that the young king was coming in a frolic to attack him, as was not a very unlikely circumstance. He rose to give admittance to what he believed to be a band of court rioters, and was killed as he opened the door. For the space of three days the fury of slaughter raged unabated, and continued in a less degree for a whole week. Of all the Protestants of the royal palace, the three Margaret saved, and the old Huguenot nurse of the king, together with his pet physician, were the only survivors. Sully, afterwards the celebrated minister of Navarre, when Henry IV. of France, escaped in the robe of a scholar, by carrying a large prayer-book under his arm ; and the Calvinist minister, who was attending on Coligny at his death, was one of the friends that brave old man urged to save themselves, and was providentially enabled to do so. He got over the roof of the houses into a hay-loft, where he lay hid for the entire week, while his life was preserved by a hen, who came daily to deposit her egg in a nest close to him. Some Protestants who lived at the other side of the Seine escaped also. It is said that Charles, seeing the probable escape of a party of these, fired on them himself from a window of the palace. Such an act was not wanted to cover his memory with the infamy, which belongs even to the weak who voluntarily yield to wickedness. High and low, the noble and the

servant, were torn from their beds, murdered, and flung out of their windows. The little prince de Couti was carried by his old governor into the streets, who thought some one would protect them. The little child tried to cover the old man with his arms, but such defence was vain. Thus was the long-continued conflict against Protestantism in France brought to its consummation ; but still, still to be renewed.

A royal messenger was despatched to Rome with tidings of this triumph. The cardinal of Lorraine was there, and questioned the man as if he already knew what was to have taken place. The pope exulted in the victory of the church, and went with the bishops and cardinals, in public procession, to give thanks for it in public. A medal was struck to commemorate the downfall of Protestantism in the kingdom of France : and it has even been asserted, that the head of the old defender of that faith, admiral Coligny, was sent as a present to the pope.

The intelligence was differently received in England. Elizabeth testified her horror of this dreadful act. The French ambassador, on going to her court, found herself and all her ladies attired in deep mourning ; the rooms were hung in black, and he was received in a mournful and reproachful silence.

Spain rejoiced with Rome ; but the court of France itself was as miserable as guilty consciences could render it. We could almost hope that the wretched king was the victim of

insanity. On the second day of the massacre, he described his feelings to his physician, and said his soul and body burned in constant fever. He saw bloody faces around him, and thought the air was full of hideous sounds. In consequence of the advice he received, a trumpeter was sent to proclaim a cessation of the massacre : but the licence of a furious mob, once permitted, is not easily checked. Charles found not only his Protestant, but many of his Roman Catholic subjects were murdered. Robbery raged everywhere, and private revenge took occasion of the tumult, so that many who were not Huguenots suffered death with them. One of the leaders who acted under the orders of the king and his mother, said, “ Paris has the air of a city taken by storm ; to the regret of those who thus ordered it, who meant only to cause the death of the chiefs, and of the factious ; . . . but all the Huguenots were killed by the people, indifferently, the king not being able to control the arms he had once let loose. . . . When rage began to cool, the act looked more formidable to the mind : the blood that was shed wounded the conscience.” Conscience indeed, however hardened, will awake, but the influence of such a sinful and dissipated court as that of Catharine de’ Medici, can be guessed at from the fact, that the fine ladies of that court went to amuse themselves in looking at the dead bodies of their Protestant acquaintances, whom they had but a day before joined with in gay society.

Yet, while many a dying bed can witness to the power of an awakening conscience, religious prejudice and bigoted feeling have also been known to retain their sway to the end. The French author above quoted gives an account of the death-bed of his father, one of the foremost of the assassins at this massacre, who shouted in the streets of Paris, "Bleed! bleed!—bleeding is as useful in the month of August as in May!" But when this man lay dying, and had made a general confession of the sins of his life, his son records, in his memoirs, that the confessor, surprised at his passing over the events of St. Bartholomew, asked him, had he nothing to say on that subject. "I regard it," said the dying marshal, "as a meritorious action which ought to efface all my sins."

The king of Navarre, and the prince de Condé, says Sully, in his Memoirs, were summoned to attend the king: "they were forbid to take their swords, and as they went out, they saw several of their gentlemen disrespectfully massacred before their eyes. Charles received them with a visage and eyes in which fury was painted, and ordered them, with the oaths and blasphemies which were familiar to him, to quit a religion which they had taken up as a pretext for rebellion. . . . He told them he would be no longer contradicted in his sentiments by his subjects, and that they should teach others, by their example, to revere him as the image of God, and to cease to be enemies to the images of his mother.

He ended, by declaring, that if they did not go to mass, he would forthwith treat them as criminals, guilty of treason against Divine and human majesty. The manner in which these words were pronounced not permitting them to doubt but that they were sincere, they bended under violence, and did what was exacted. Though this submission saved Navarre's life, in other respects he fared but little the better for it. He was subject to the caprices and insults of the court; at times free, oftener closely confined, and treated as a criminal."*

Navarre, whom Voltaire calls "the firmest and most intrepid of men," and who, indeed, was so in general, did not, in the cause of religion, show the firmness of a little girl of thirteen years old, the daughter of a Protestant minister, who suffered herself to be tortured with hot irons without making the concession which the firm-hearted king almost immediately made.

Both Navarre and Condé consented to go to mass, though they did not formally abjure, and both were obliged to remain in a state of miserable slavery at the court of France. The name of religion is thus seen to be different from the power of religion. The king of Navarre, fretful and impatient, either passed his time in revolving plans for his escape from the court, or plunged into a wild excess of riot with the still more unhappy Charles. He, together with the old nurse and physician, are said to have been the only persons whom that remorseful king either

* Sully's Memoirs, Vol. 1.

loved or trusted. He was jealous of his brother Anjou, and feared his cruel mother. From the time of the Huguenot massacre he plunged into the wildest dissipation, and seemed to seek a refuge from thought in constant and violent exercise, delighting chiefly in hunting and blowing the horn.

The duke of Anjou was elected king of Poland, but his reluctance to leave the gay court of Paris displeased his brother. Catharine interposed, and prevailed on her favourite son to depart, using the afterwards remembered words, "Go, my son; you will not stay long away." Charles accompanied his brother, intending to see him as far on his road as the frontier of the kingdom; but he was taken ill and obliged to return. From that time, it is conjectured, a slow, but fatal, poison worked on his frame; and suspicion attaches to his brother, or mother, or both. Such a crime might easily be imputed to Catharine de' Medici.

In the course of his illness a plot was discovered, the object of which was to release Navarre and Condé from thralldom. In the room of one of the conspirators was found a waxen image, which it was believed a magician had made, in order to destroy the king's life by sympathy. His physician imputed his illness to his having blown too hard upon the horn when hunting. That illness was of a singular nature. Blood issued from his ears, eyes, nose, and even from the pores of his body. He was indifferent to all things, and was watched only

by the old Huguenot woman and the Huguenot doctor. He would cry to his Protestant nurse, when assailed by remorse, "Ah! my friend, I have followed wrong advice; God forgive me! What will be the consequence of all this? What shall I do? I feel I am lost!"

The dislike which the wretched king had latterly felt for his mother increased as he drew near his end. Sully says: "The condition to which Charles saw himself reduced created suspicion in his mind against his mother; so that, uniting his interest with the reformed, he began to show them a great deal of good-will." "It principally appeared in his permitting them, notwithstanding the opposition of the queen mother, to send deputies to state their grievances and demands at court. The petition, indeed, was signed only by four or five gentlemen, but it showed unshaken firmness in a party that seemed to derive strength from its losses. The queen conceived a violent spite. The king now refused her his authority, and all she could do was to use delays, till the death of this prince, which she well foresaw was not far distant. The reformed penetrated her intention; and that they might not be surprised, appeared suddenly in arms."* The dying king had no longer any taste for cruelty and blood. When his mother came exultingly to tell him that the Huguenot count Montgomery had at last been taken, and would be executed, Charles turned

away his head in silence. When death was drawing on he asked for his brother; Catharine brought his youngest; he said, "Not this; my brother Navarre." Navarre was then in confinement, owing to the late conspiracy. He expected to receive a sentence of death; but when Charles saw him he stretched out his arms to him. Navarre threw himself on his knees beside him, weeping to see his state. He did not leave him again till death came on.

Thus, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, died Charles IX., after filling the throne of France for fourteen years. Truly "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!" We feel their blessedness, when we stand by the bed of the dying saint; we feel it also when we stand by the bed of the dying sinner. Charles IX. survived the massacre of his Protestant subjects about a year and nine months, dying on the 30th of May, 1574. "It could not," says Brantome, "be driven out of some persons' minds that he was poisoned when his brother went to Poland, by some powder, which makes a person languish a long time, dwindle away, and go out like the wick of a candle."

We wished to finish his sad history before glancing briefly over the events of that of Protestantism, which intervened between the date of his death and that of the too memorable massacre which is named from St. Bartholomew's day.

An abbé of the Roman church has said, "The court thought to drown Calvinism in the

blood of its principal defenders, but the hydra resumed fresh vigour." To judge of the violent effort made to extinguish, by a general massacre, what neither ceaseless persecution nor arms could put down, we must not stop with the cruel massacre at Paris. Massacre became general through France; wherever there were Protestants, there there were murders. Orders were issued from the court to the governors of towns or provinces for that purpose. It is related of one governor, that he replied to Charles, saying, his majesty had many faithful subjects in that town, but not one executioner. The speech, though a noble one, is said, by some authors, to be fabulous.

We do not intend to dwell on the frightful scenes that speedily ensued. They commenced in the city of Meaux, where the gospel, aided by the good, but unstedfast bishop, the pious Lefèvre, and the resolute Farel, had once so brightly flourished. At Lyons, always eminent in the history of Christianity, of Protestantism, and of martyrdom, the massacres were so great, that the waters of the Rhone ran red with blood; and at Arles, where the first Christian council of ancient Gaul was held, the inhabitants could not use these blood-stained waters. Yet Protestantism was not extinct. A large number of Protestants, with many of their Calvinist ministers, shut themselves up in Rochelle, and there endured the long and well-known siege of five months' duration, suffering famine and pestilence, and

resisting their enemies with a fury which even women and children shared.

A peace was at last obtained on more favourable terms than might have been expected. Its chief particulars were liberty of conscience, accorded to the Protestants in three of the provincial towns, Nismes, Montauban, and la Rochelle. The higher orders were allowed to have the rites of baptism and marriage performed, according to the reformed mode, in their houses, or castles, on condition of not more than ten persons being present.

The prince de Condé escaped into Germany at the time of the conspiracy before alluded to. On arriving at the first German town, Strasburgh, he renewed his profession of Protestantism.

Montgomery, who had proved one of the most formidable of the Huguenot commanders, was taken and executed, after being barbarously tortured, to induce him to criminate admiral Coligny. This he refused to do, and was afterwards executed, as Catharine, whether she believed him to be guilty or not, charged him with wilfully killing her husband, Henry II. As he was going to execution, he refused to attend to the priest who had been placed by his side. A monk, pitying his apparently hardened state, addressed him also, and told him he had been grossly deceived. "If I have," replied Montgomery, with firmness, "it was one of your own order who first deceived me; for the first person who gave me a Bible, and made

me read it, was a monk like you. From that Bible I learned the religion I now possess. The religion of the Bible is the only true one; I have lived in it ever since, and desire now, by the grace of God, to die in it."

With the close of the reign of Charles IX. we end this volume of the history of Protestantism in France. Can we conclude this painfully-interesting narrative better than with a prayer for the whole estate of Christ's church militant here on earth, that it may be so guided and governed by God's good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves **CHRISTIANS** may be led into the way of truth; and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life?

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